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PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN AMERICA

A SURVEY OF THE ENLARGING PILGRIM FAITH

By

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"Mysticism and Modern Life," etc.

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PREFACE

This volume aims to do for a movement in American theology something of that which Principal Tulloch's *Religious Thought in Great Britain during the Nineteenth Century* did for a better known period in English and Scotch theology. The studies which it comprises keep close to the personalities through whom the movement arose and progressed. They are biographical appreciations as well as theological studies. If in some cases they suggest eulogies, or even panegyrics, it is because personal contact has begotten in the author a deep, but he trusts not unintelligent, admiration for men whose breadth and earnestness of thought issued from a like nobility of mind and character. There are times when estimates, however judicial, become inevitable tributes. The writer hardly needs to state that the volume is largely the result of gratitude to minds that have stimulated and enriched his own.

While it would be too sanguine to assume that at the present time there is any marked concentration of attention upon religious thought, there is a certain steady interest in a subject so

vital, augmented as the general mind settles back upon permanent spiritual concerns after its absorption in the Great War. The inherent attraction of the history of the growth of religious thought is quickened in this case by the proximity of the tercentenary of the founding of Pilgrim New England, with all the deeply sacred associations that attach to that notable event, including its fruitage in this development of the Pilgrim faith.

In entitling this a survey of progress in American religious thought the author does not intend to imply that progress began with the men or the movement described. On the contrary, it commenced with some of the earliest members of the colonial ministry, as a study of New England theology plainly discloses. There was an ardent sincerity in the religious life and thought of New England from the first which lit more than one lamp of original thought that was not hid under a bushel. Yet those earlier liberal thinkers were isolated. The movement here described won its way by coöperation. Nor would the author give the impression that he has no sense of the place and value of intelligent conservatism in religious thought, exerting, as it does, a wise and helpful restraint upon too im-

petuous and ill-considered advance. Yet conservatism, though essential and useful, is not of the first importance as compared with thought that wins new ground for coming generations.

The chronologies which I have been advised to include call for a word of comment. While they are at best but symbols — often clanging cymbals — they serve to some extent as indications of the movement of a life, inner as well as outer, toward its larger ends. In the preparation of these I have been indebted in large measure to the several biographies referred to and to that invaluable record of contemporary history, *Who's Who in America*, as well as to information personally acquired.

To my colleagues and others who have lent encouragement and assistance I extend hearty thanks. If something of the mental and spiritual uplift which have come through the preparation of these studies communicates itself, it will prove to have been a fruitful task, — yielding a fresh sense of the depth and scope of Christianity as it reveals itself in the enlarging thought of these progressive interpreters of the Pilgrim faith.

JOHN WRIGHT BUCKHAM

Berkeley, California

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PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN AMERICA

CHAPTER I

HORACE BUSHNELL AND THE LIBERATORS

HORACE BUSHNELL

1802. April 14. Birth in Litchfield, Conn.
1821. United with church in New Preston, Conn.
1823. Entered Yale College.
1827–28. Taught school in Norwich, Conn.
1827. Graduated from Yale College.
1828–29. Associate editor of *Journal of Commerce*, New York.
1829–31. Tutor at Yale College. Pursued law studies.
1831. Entered Yale Divinity School.
1833. May 23. Ordained pastor of North Church in Hartford, Conn.
1833. Sept. 13. Married in New Haven, Mary Apthorp.
1841. Received degree of Doctor of Divinity from Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.
1845. Visited Europe in search of health.
1849. Hartford Central Association discussed the book, "God in Christ." Errors not found fundamental.
1850. Remonstrances and Complaints of Fairfield West Association to Hartford Central Association upon their action in the case of Dr. Bushnell.
1852. North Church of Hartford withdrew from Consociation.
1854. Protest of the Pastoral Union to the pastors and churches of New England.
1856. Life in California.
1856. Invited to the presidency of the College of California. Declined in 1861, after rendering valuable service.
1859. Resigned from North Church, Hartford, on account of continued ill-health, and against unanimous wish of the people.
1876. February 17. Death in Hartford, Conn.

PROGRESSIVE RELIGIOUS THOUGHT IN AMERICA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

HORACE BUSHNELL AND THE LIBERATORS

History, commencing as a chronicle of events, has widened into an ampler account of human life, including not only its outer incidents but its inner movements. Close to the heart of history is religion — at first instinctive, inarticulate, unaware of its own content, but gradually becoming self-conscious and creating, as do other forms of experience, a science, theology.

Viewed as a dogmatic systemism, theology has lost its interest; viewed as a progressive science, in the light of the principle of development, it regains its hold upon human interest

and confidence. Deny the fact, or the possibility, of *progress* in theology and its whole area appears only as a field of dry bones. Admit this principle and the search for ultimate truths takes on not only life and attractiveness but large and genuine import. Thanks to the recognition of its progressive nature theology, after a period of due abasement, gives promise of recovering its true place and mission. If religion is a vital human interest, theology cannot be inconsequential. For theology is the flesh and bones as well as the every-day garment of religion, without which it cannot preserve its normal life, much less its self-respect.

I

The development of religious thought in America, as elsewhere, is closely bound up with the wider movement of thought of which it is a part. Yet it has a certain continuity of its own which calls for more careful study than it has received. This becomes increasingly clear as the attention given to the history of European theology is compared to that which American theology has won.[1] Whatever the disparity,

[1] I. A. Dorner closed his *History of Protestant Theology* with a survey of American theology. It occupies three pages out of a thousand; but it was written in 1867.

American religious thought is by no means negligible.

The construction of our religious and theological history is going forward steadily. Such recent histories as F. H. Foster's "History of the New England Theology," Woodbridge Riley's "American Thought," the King's Chapel lectures on "The Religious History of New England," and such biographies as Allen's "Jonathan Edwards," Chadwick's "Channing," Munger's "Horace Bushnell," and Allen's "Phillips Brooks" are disclosing something of the direction as well as the resources of American theology.

The present volume is chiefly concerned with a movement and a group of men as yet but meagerly estimated, which is in fact but just passing from the stage, but whose contribution to theological progress is clear enough to call for analysis and appreciation. This company of Christian thinkers entered upon its task upon soil made ready by the liberators and pioneers of progressive religious thought in America — whose work it will be necessary to consider briefly in order to gain a proper perspective. Chief among these was Horace Bushnell, to whom will be given the greater part of this introductory chapter.

II

Bushnell was in some respects almost as truly the father of the later constructive development of American theology as was Jonathan Edwards of the earlier.[1] Each was an original, creative mind; and, like every such mind, each continues creative and potential. Theirs is not a single impact, once exerted, now withdrawn. We go back constantly to such minds not only to secure more comprehensive insights but for fresh impetus and incentive. They may not be retired as mere historic and defunct figures; they are among us still, for "spirit is when and where it energizes" and "the dead live when we think of them."[2]

This is notably true of Bushnell. The last twenty-five years have witnessed a greatly

[1] "Other thinkers were moving in the same direction; he led the movement in New England and wrought out a great deliverance." (T. T. Munger: *Horace Bushnell*, p. 413.) "He had a vast influence upon theology in America." (Williston Walker: *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed.; article on "Bushnell.") "I venture the prediction that posterity will accord Bushnell no second place among the prophets of these latter days and that the verdict of history will pronounce him one of the greatest religious geniuses which Christianity has hitherto produced." (George B. Stevens, speaking at the New Haven observance of the Bushnell centenary.)

[2] C. H. Dickinson: *The Christian Reconstruction of Modern Life*, pp. 92, 94.

enhanced estimate of his part in theological advance and a fresh sense of the unexhausted treasures of his productive personality. He stood very much alone in his relation to most American theologians, out of harmony with his immediate predecessors and contemporaries, unfamiliar with the deeper mind of the greatest of his forerunners. There is no indication that Bushnell knew Edwards' writings to any extent at first hand, else possibly he might have gotten from him something of that sense of the validity of intuitivism which came to him through Coleridge; and thus the line of continuity might have been a more direct one. Yet that matters less than the fact that in spite of the deep and apparently impassable chasm between these two productive American thinkers, there is, nevertheless, an unconscious bond. It consists in that reliance upon spiritual intuition which characterized them both. But for that, there would be little in common between them. The two belong to different theological eras. They are farther apart than are Augustine and Edwards or Clement of Alexandria and Bushnell. Edwards' mysticism and idealism had been lost to sight in the wastes of his Calvinistic system and Bushnell knew him only as the

protagonist of sovereignty and the antagonist of freedom, the Titan of the old theology.

The legacy of the New England theology gave to Bushnell a heavy task. It left more to reject than to aid, more to halt than to help him. He had to clear away the intricate entanglement of doctrines alien to pure Christianity that had grown up in the somber shadows of Edwards' Calvinism, in order to let in the light. This mission he fulfilled with signal success, for he was a typical pioneer, with all the vigor, courage, and determination — and detachment from the past — of a pioneer. Builder of roads, theological reconstructor, Bushnell forged his own way ahead with relatively little dependence upon others.

III

The first task that confronted him was to deliver the religious life of his day from the bondage of inflexibility and obscurantism that fettered it and to restore to it naturalness and reality. This he did in that very humble but potent initial crusade in behalf of a wider Christianity, "Christian Nurture" (1846).[1]

[1] Dr. A. C. McGiffert judges of this book that it "did perhaps more than any other single agency to break down the extreme individualism of the old Puritan theology of America." See *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*, p. 277, note.

There was no point at which the rigidity, the barrenness, the inertia of the older theology, as it affected the Christian life, showed itself more baldly than in its treatment of the religion of child life. It bound the spontaneous budding of the religious instinct to one inflexible and extreme pattern. It starved some of the most normal instincts. This is reflected in the words of Harriet Beecher Stowe: "With all New England's earnestness and practical efficiency, there is a long withering of the soul's more ethereal portion,— a crushing out of the beautiful,— which is horrible." The offense thus committed was more than against a single phase in the development of the inner life. It wronged the organic nature, the unity and vitality and freedom of religion itself. Bushnell saw this and arraigned both the theory and the practice.

> Our very theory of religion is that men are to grow up in evil and be dragged into the church of God by conquest. The world is to lie in halves and the kingdom of God is to stretch itself side by side with the kingdom of darkness, making sallies into it and taking captive those who are sufficiently hardened and bronzed in guiltiness to be converted. Thus we assume even the absurdity of all our expectations in regard to the possible advancement of human society and the universal prevalence of

Christian virtue. And thus we throw an air of extravagance and unreason over all we do.[1]

He did not make the mistake, however, of pronouncing human nature wholly pure and good, so that all that is needed is to let it unfold of itself.

There is no so unreasonable assumption, none so wide of all just philosophy as that which proposes to form a child to virtue by simply educing or drawing out what is in him. The growth of Christian virtue is no vegetable process, no mere onward development. It involves a struggle with evil, a fall and rescue.[2]

Yet in spite of this discipline of the soul by struggle with an innate "pravity," Bushnell saw that the life of God is in the life of the race; that the church, with all its imperfections, is a "body of believers"; that "the organic unity of the family" is a reality upon which Christianity can count. The steady current of the Christian faith flows normally into the life of successive generations and forms an organic spiritual continuum which cannot be ignored without great loss.

It is not to be supposed that because Bushnell thus laid stress upon the nurture side of Chris-

[1] *Christian Nurture*, 1st ed., pp. 25, 26.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

tianity, he disputed or ignored its redemptive mission. To this he had already given full allegiance in an article in "The Christian Spectator" entitled "The Spiritual Economy of Revivals of Religion" (1838), in which he sought to correct the abuses and misconceptions of revivals so that they might "constitute an ebb and flow measured only by the pulses of the Spirit." His purpose throughout was not to limit but to enlarge the recognition of the methods and workings of that Divine Spirit who is as varied in his operations as the variations of human temperament and as multiform as the gifts of the Divine grace.

The clarity and cogency of Bushnell's apprehension of the principle of *development* underlying "Christian Nurture" appears in a paper published in "The New Englander" in 1844 — reprinted in "Christian Nurture" — entitled "Growth, not Conquest, the True Method of Christian Progress," in the course of which he affirms:

> To roll a snowball and to grow an oak are not the same thing. Enlargement of volume is a result in both cases; but beyond this they have nothing in common. In one the result is wrought by external force; in the other by a vital force within. . . . In the snowball there is at no time any internal power

of production or self enlargement. Not one of the particles in its cold body can it quicken or fructify; whereas in the tree there is a vital self-active power.[1]

From this the writer goes on to show the distinguishing qualities of the "self-activity" of the mind, manifesting an insight that foreshadows William T. Harris' ardent and profound exposition of the same principle.[2]

IV

A second deliverance accomplished by Bushnell lay in undermining the rationalism of the New England theology and replacing it with a theology of experience, in which intuition and unity take the place of dogma and system. This was a prophetic emancipation. It came with abundant refreshment and promise of new life, like the music of raindrops after a drought, and was followed by verdure, blossom, and fruitage as of a new and affluent season of the soul.

The chief means by which this transformation was effected was drastic. It consisted of his well-known exposition of the deficiency and

[1] *Christian Nurture*, 1st ed., p. 147.

[2] See, e.g., W. T. Harris: *Psychologic Foundations of Education.*

incapacity of language to serve as the medium of religious truth. Here was a simple, understandable, singularly effective, and yet very radical critique of theology. So radical was it, in fact, that for those who accepted it too unreservedly it came near undermining not only rationalism itself, but the very foundations of theology as a science. The famous "Dissertation on Language"— which forms the Introduction to "God in Christ," — "Christ in Theology,"— consisting of replies to the attacks upon his position — the Andover address "Dogma and Spirit," and "The Gospel a Gift to the Imagination" constitute a unique and original chapter in theological method. The sincere and sensitive mind of Bushnell was repulsed at the very beginning of his study of theology by the systemism which held even the virile mind of his teacher, Nathanael W. Taylor, in its iron vise. Seeking patiently for some explanation of the curse of ineptitude and stagnation which rested upon theology he found it at length — so he thought — in the very nature of *language*, supplemented by its incompetent aids, grammar and logic.

The long-sanctioned and authoritative theological terms which so brow-beat the inquiring

mind and awe it into submission; whence are they and how and why do they exercise so imperial an authority? Bushnell looked into their real nature and found — what? Airy symbols that rise like genii from mere physical objects and relations. What are these impressive terms, he asked, but words, and what are words but figures whose root is in the common soil of every-day sensuous life? The revelation almost overthrew his faith in theology itself. "Words, words, words,"— what is it all but this? Are we to be the dupes of these unstable phantasmagoria, imagining them to be the very substance of truth itself? But let Bushnell speak for himself:

> Words of thought or spirit are not only inexact in their significance, never measuring the truth or giving its precise equivalent, but they always affirm something which is false, or contrary to the truth intended. They impute *form* to that which is really out of form. They are related to the truth only as form to spirit, — earthen vessels in which the truth is borne, yet always offering their mere flattery as being the truth itself.[1]

To this paralogism of language, aggravated by grammar, there succeeds what seemed to Bushnell the deception of logic, because of the

[1] *God in Christ*, 1st ed., p. 48.

imperfections of which "the logical expounder can make it certain by almost no degree of caution that he is not imposing on himself by spinning a theory that is really of some word or latent form of grammar in his language and not of the consciousness itself." [1] Moreover, when by a process of elaborate "spinning," a coherent system of unified thought is constructed, it is vitiated by the partiality or prejudice of the mind, or system of thought, out of which it issued: "There is a form element in every system of thought or doctrine which assimilates all the words employed, insinuating into them, or imposing upon them, a character partly from itself." [2]

By a process of criticism of which these citations are hints, Bushnell formulated a brief against the very idea of theology which leaves the too receptive reader wondering if theology has any claim to reverence or even to respect. Driven by these exposures of the inadequacy of theology he falls back upon what he calls "a Perceptive Power in Spiritual Life." [3] He sees, that is, and does not hesitate to avow, that as for himself and his spiritual kin, they are

[1] *Christ in Theology*, 1st ed., p. 85. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 46.
[3] *God in Christ*, p. 93.

mystics. He concludes that this is a "mystic world," that "there is something of a mystic quality in almost every writing of the New Testament." [1] Thus he gives in his allegiance to that attitude toward truth which has been the resort of so many devout minds alienated by the barrenness of rationalism.

The result of this critique was in the main wholesome, for it was just this rationalistic aspect of truth which was killing the New England theology. Only, unhappily, Bushnell carried his conclusions so far that in pruning the tree of theology he all but killed it for such minds as followed him easily in his criticism but not so readily in his construction.

Reflecting upon these theological incompetencies and deficiencies, by a fine ascent to higher level he is led to distinguish between theology and what he termed "Divinity,"— a kind of truth-discovery that relies upon inspiration and not upon reflection.

> The student then will be a student, not of theology, but, in a proper sense, of divinity. The knowledge he gets will be divinity, filling his whole consciousness — a Living State and not a scheme of wise sentences. He will be a man who understands God as being indoctrinated or inducted into God, by

[1] *God in Christ*, p. 95.

studies that are themselves inbreathings of the divine love and power.[1]

The distinction is a valid and suggestive one, provided it does not mean that theology as a science should be relegated to oblivion in favor of pure intuition. For if there be not some true and proper method by which the insights of "Divinity" may be interpreted and unified a true science of theology is impossible.

V

It is to the honor of Bushnell's catholic mind and to the advantage of American theology that this undaunted critic of theology, after all, never got farther in his doubt of it than to ask the question: "Is it probable that theology . . . can ever become a science or attain to a fixed and properly authoritative statement?"[2] For a time he wavered in his own answer to that question, but finally, in effect, answered it in the affirmative. All through his persistently honest and open-minded balancing of the infirmities and aspirations of theology, one may detect the hesitation and unwillingness with which he held back from committing himself to a complete condemnation of theology. He

[1] *Christ in Theology*, p. 67. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

sees that it is well for the mind to theologize, though he thinks that "the exercise of system or endeavor after system is commonly a greater benefit than the actually resulting systems prepared." [1] He perceives that "to crucify the instinct of system is, in one view, to crucify the intelligence." "I have a certain conviction, whether I can show the reasons or not, that we must have something, somehow held and exercised, that may be called theology." [2] Thus in spite of his radicalism, he refrains from the condemnation of theology as a rational science until at length he virtually not only concedes its value but contributes to its advance.

There was in fact an initial insight of his that kept Bushnell back from becoming a calumniator and foe of theology and that formed the principle which lay at the very basis of his theory of language, i.e., that this is a *logos* world, that reason lies back of symbol. "There is a logos in the form of things," he declares, "by which they are prepared to serve as types or images of what is inmost in our souls." [3] The best proof, however, that Bushnell transcended his depreciation of theology is that he himself went on in his

[1] *Christ in Theology*, p. 80.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[3] *God in Christ*, p. 30.

later books to construct the outlines of a science of theology of large and organic rationality. The fact is, he completely outgrew his theory on the side of its negations, as appears, for example, in the preface to "Nature and the Supernatural" in which he describes the volume as follows:

> Here is a wide hypothesis of the world, and the great problem of life and sin and supernatural redemption and Christ and a Christly Providence and a divinely certified history and of superhuman gifts entered into the world and finally of God as related to all, which liquidates these stupendous facts in issue between Christians and unbelievers and gives a rational account of them.

Thus critic became constructor, so that we now term him not only a great "divine," but a great theologian.[1]

[1] Yet even when this is granted, we should not fail to recognize that Bushnell dealt theology a sore and unwarranted wound, too much like those of the philistines, giving encouragement to many to assume that specious contempt of theology which to-day controls many minds who confuse theology with the arid theologism which is its caricature. It was deficient knowledge of its achievements and an immature exaggeration of its defects which led Bushnell to his failure to recognize the full office of reason in religion, to his identification of theology with terminology, and to the *pan-credalism* which led him to say, "So far from suffering even the least consciousness of restraint or oppression under any creed, I have been readier to accept as great a number as fell in my way" (*God in Christ*, p. 82). Not that he deserves depreciation for these misadventures. It was his mission, not to explicate and defend theology, but to correct it

VI

A third great deliverance which Bushnell effected, or at least greatly furthered, lay in breaking down the dividing wall between nature and the supernatural, revealing both as "parts of one system." This was accomplished in his "Nature and the Supernatural" (1858) which was the true sequel and completion of his "Christian Nurture." In this field of thought, Bushnell, without being fully aware of it, assaulted and despoiled that stronghold of scholasticism which had withstood the progress of truth from the mediæval theology onward, i.e., the conception of two separate realms, the kingdoms of Spirit and Nature with their corresponding explicants, Revelation and Reason.

The segregation of the natural from the spiritual, of Reason from Revelation, cherished by Protestant as well as Catholic theology, resulted in giving the supernatural an arbitrary, unreal character, and in restricting revelation to the covers of the Bible — interpreted with a literal unhistorical rigidity — and in branding

for its departures from its high calling, to restore that lost "Divinity," with which it should be "saturated" in order to become a science at all. But it is irrelevant if not irreverent to find flaws in so noble a gift of God as this fertile and affluent mind and its fruitage.

all the ordinary activities and intents of life as alien from religion. Because of this misconception religion had come to seem, too often, only a sickly and artificial light, playing like pale moonbeams upon a cold and loveless world. Under the sway of this scholasticism New England theology, while esteeming herself the guardian and nursing mother of religion, had in reality become estranged from the very spirit of religion and had grown frigidly and drearily dualistic. No one saw this mistake more clearly than Bushnell, and he had the courage to expose it. The way in which by a well-directed assault he pierced this decadent rationalistic system and brought it to its fall was by showing that *man himself belongs primarily and chiefly to the supernatural realm.* Personality, as he saw, is a spiritual reality, domiciling in nature.

> The very idea of our personality is that of a being not under the law of cause and effect, a being supernatural. This one point, clearly apprehended, all the difficulties of our subject are at once relieved, if not absolutely and completely removed.[1]

Here was a revolutionary principle; as its proponent very well understood. "If any one is

[1] *Nature and the Supernatural*, 2d ed., p. 43.

startled or shocked by what appears to be the extravagance of this position," Bushnell reminds him that "we, as powers not in the line of cause and effect, can set causes in nature at work in new combinations otherwise never occurring, and produce, by our action upon nature, results which she, as nature, could never produce by her own internal acting." [1]

With this clear perception of the priority and worth of personality as a supernatural reality, it is not surprising to find Bushnell molding his whole theory of nature to conform to the interests and aims of personality. From this it follows, in his mind, that "the world is governed supernaturally in the interest of Christianity." Viewed from this standpoint miracles become for him manifestations of a spiritual order; for a miracle is only "a supernatural act, an act, that is, which operates on the chain of cause and effect from without the chain." [2] Not that he would call every such act a miracle, reserving the term for such only as "move our wonder and evince the presence of a more than human power." [3] This opens the way for his famous argument for the continu-

[1] *Nature and the Supernatural*, 2d ed., p. 43.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 336. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 336.

ance of miracles[1] — a contention in which he strains his principle to the breaking point.

In consistent but mistaken correspondence with this view of nature, as intended for the uses of supernatural man, he pictures the disorders and deformities of creation antedating man's arrival, disclosed by geology, as being antitypes of human sin, foreseen and preprovided "anticipative consequences" of man's lapse into a spiritual deformity and disfigurement of which these misshapen forms in nature should be the rebuking mirror.[2] So also the "dark things" in our present contacts with nature — pain, disease, danger, plague, insanity, mutabilities — are the disciplinary dispensations adapted for "moral uses."[3] By trial and testing they aid us in the development of personal character. Such was the moral optimism of this courageous and confident mind.

There is a wealth of faith and courage in this view of nature. Here was no "Bridgewater system" vainly striving to conceal the frowns and wrinkles upon the face of life by well-

[1] *Nature and the Supernatural*, 2d ed., chap. XIV.

[2] *Ibid.*, chap. VII.

[3] See *The Moral Uses of Dark Things*.

intentioned falsifications. And yet Bushnell's eyes were holden from that more inclusive knowledge of nature by means of which science was about to help the theologian solve these difficult problems in a very different manner. "It is pathetic," as Munger remarks, "to think of him standing on the borderland of evolution, but not entering it. Few would have so fully grasped its central meaning and clearly traced it to its divine conclusion." [1] Had he had the advantages of that larger knowledge of nature which has come since his day, without relinquishing his hold upon the twofoldness of the universe he might have realized the closer intimacy between matter and spirit and the light thrown upon his problem by the law of development. As a matter of fact, man cannot act wholly from *without* the chain of nature but only as himself both within it and at the same time transcending it. Had Bushnell perceived this, he might have caught, as did Paul, indications that nature is not only groaning and travailing for the sake of man, but for *her own* adoption. For she, too, has a part in the preliminary process of evolving personality — though not herself the author of personality.

[1] *Horace Bushnell*, p. 344.

In her are the germs of that freedom that become conscious and personal in man. Nature reaches forward. The very flower and tree, in their own way, aspire,

> And willing to be God, the worm
> Flees through all the spires of form.[1]

It was this aspect of nature which Bushnell failed to appreciate, not having entered the kingdom of the truth of development where he that is least is greater than the greatest in the realm of the static.

Yet it would be unjust to find fault for that limitation in Bushnell's vision for which his age, not he, was responsible. It was his mission to introduce a new and larger, if still imperfect, sense of the unity of the realm of God, and to emphasize that priority of spirit to nature, through which alone their true unity is apprehensible.

VII

The fourth, and on the whole perhaps the greatest, service of Bushnell to theology lay in what he did toward the recovery of Christ as the central light and potency of Christianity.

It is passing strange how the New England theology, through its bondage to Calvinism,

[1] Emerson: *Journal*, vol. VII, p. 17.

had allowed the real Christ to fade out of Christianity, leaving a frame without a picture. It is true that the theological Christ essential to the "plan of redemption" was made much of, but he was but a pale and unreal reflection of the Christ of the Gospels. Bushnell reillumined Christianity with the light of the true Christ. His was the "Gospel of the Face"— a face which was "as the sun shining in his strength" and lighting up all the heavy shadows and dark recesses of an otherwise dismal theological world. The church of America has not yet realized to the full the Christ-ward tendency and outcome of Bushnell's influence, nor the true greatness of the conception of Christ which he has given to her. The superb tenth chapter of "Nature and the Supernatural," "The Character of Jesus Forbidding his Possible Classification with Men," has been republished separately and has become widely known and valued. In spite of the presence in it of metaphysical presuppositions no longer regnant, it is a masterpiece. But far profounder and more moving is the noble interpretation of Christ buried in the midst of a somewhat barren discussion in "The Vicarious Sacrifice" (1866).[1]

[1] Part II of the volume.

This, too, might well be given separate form and circulation. In its deep feeling, its elevation and its tenderness, this description of Christ carries the mind back to that morning vision when, with glowing face and vibrant voice, Bushnell exclaimed to his wife, "I have seen the Gospel."[1] It was a mystical vision, similar in nature to Paul's, that gave Bushnell *his* gospel. But other factors enter into his appreciation of Christ,—searching analysis, intensive reflection, subtle discernment, large and releasing ideas of God and life and truth. It would be difficult to find a nobler presentation than is here made of the true nature of moral power as it appears in Christ — its humility, selflessness, cumulative character, self-control, tenacity, patience, endurance. Such a presentation of Christ as this could come only from one who had known Him in the intimacy of such a discipleship as he himself described when he wrote, "It wants a Christed man to know who Christ really is and to show Him forth with a meaning."[2] Reverence and affection reach their climax in this picture of the blended moral majesty and humility of the Son of Man:

[1] See Munger's *Horace Bushnell*, p. 114.

[2] "The Gospel of the Face," *Sermons on Living Subjects* (1872).

There was never, we may safely say, any such instance of self-devotion among men, never so little of heat and excitement, never such firmness coupled with such tenderness and gentleness, never such oblivion of popularity, never such incapacity to be humbled by ignominy. So that if we speak of heroes, we are tempted either to say that he is no hero at all, or else the only hero. And here it is that the moral power we have seen him obtaining culminates. In this fact, the almost feminine passivity we are likely to figure as the total account of his character, reveals the mighty underwork and robust vigor of a really immortal confidence and tenacity.[1]

By the power of Christ, Bushnell means much the same as that which is now termed his *personality*, a power which his resurrection both attested and released.

It is true that on the metaphysical side Bushnell's Christology is far from convincing. He gives an undue prominence to the Virgin Birth, based on an uncritical acceptance of the narratives. He reopens the chasm between the divine and human, which he had closed by declaring man himself a supernatural being, and places Jesus wholly and unreservedly on the divine side of it. He fails to distinguish the Jesus of History from the Christ of Faith. It is true that these defects are characteristic of

[1] *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, p. 218.

the period in which he wrote but they are detractive and stand in the way of a fuller appreciation of the otherwise unequaled mastery of his portrait of Jesus Christ in his moral and personal aspects. Yet there is a freshness and originality not only in his conception of Christ but pervading all of his thought that mark him as one of those creative minds whose mission is to enkindle others. The presence of such a mind often means more of gain to the world than either fullness or finality of thought.

VIII

Judged by the standards of system and consistency Horace Bushnell cannot be termed a great theologian. He was rather prophet, or, as he has often been called, poet, than theologian, in the accepted sense. He was too impulsive, too vivid, to hold himself to exactness. "Finding the air full of wings about me, buoyant and free, I let them come under and lift," he writes. As has been said of him, he thought first and read afterward. It might be added that he spoke his first thoughts, without waiting for his second, much less for his third thoughts; and it is third thoughts that count for most in any field of truth.

Though not a systematic theologian, however, Bushnell was much more. He was an open-minded one; and open-mindedness is too rare a virtue in theology. In bringing out his second volume on the Atonement, "Forgiveness and Law" (1874), which was intended not merely to supplement but in a measure to substitute a belated idea for the latter part of "The Vicarious Sacrifice," Bushnell uses these noble and self-effacing words which might well be pondered by the whole brotherhood of theologians:

> It seems to be required of me by the unexpected arrival of fresh light [John Robinson *redevivus*] that I should make a large revision of my former treatise entitled The Vicarious Sacrifice. . . . Having undertaken to find the truth on this great subject at whatever cost I am not willing to be excused from further obligation because the truth appears to be outgrowing my published expositions. There is no reason, personal to myself, why I should be fastened to my own small measures, when larger measures are given me. Besides, how shall man ever get rid of his old sins, when he cannot let go his little outgrown opinions?

If there is such a thing as the "scientific spirit" in theology — a spirit not so far from that of the Kingdom as Jesus defines it — surely it appears here in one of its characteristic aspects,

the willingness to substitute a later hypothesis for an earlier.

Bushnell was ever a learner, a growing mind to the end, a true progressive, in the sense of steadily making progress on himself, leaving small measures for larger, deep truth for deeper. Through all the storms of controversy which raged about him he remained calm and unembittered and kept the "mind of Christ." The ethical integrity of his character matched that of his thought. The men who supported him and the theology for which he stood, Henry M. Goodwin,[1] A. S. Cheseborough, Leonard Bacon, and others, were conscious that they were sustaining no reed shaken by the wind but honoring a sturdy and independent spirit and one who was doing for them more than they could possibly do for him. They and the devoted company of younger men whom he won to himself in Hartford and elsewhere — including Joseph Twitchell, Edwin P. Parker, Theo-

[1] Dr. Goodwin's contribution to progressive theology deserves larger recognition. His scholarly and thoughtful volume *Christ and Humanity* (1875), inscribed to Horace Bushnell, "whose profound and sanctified genius has made the world his debtor," is based upon the doctrine of "*the essential unity of the divine and human* as furnishing the ground and possibility of the indwelling of God in man, and so of forming a true humanity according to the ideal presented in the man Jesus" (p. 402).

dore T. Munger, and Washington Gladden — were drawn as much by his noble and companionable personality as by his luminous and invigorating thought. They found in him what thousands have found who never saw his face, the leadership and comradeship of a free, fearless, and devoted lover and interpreter of truth.

IX

Next to Horace Bushnell the greatest liberator of American theological thought was Henry Ward Beecher. Like Bushnell a child of the Pilgrim heritage, his revolt from the Old Theology was all the more significant in that it was against doctrines ably taught and defended by his own father, who, though a battler for a modified Calvinism, was far too severe in his theology for his sons.[1] His theology, like Bushnell's, grew out of a mystical experience and, like his, it centered in Christ. He too had his mystical morning vision "when it pleased God to reveal to my wandering soul the idea that

[1] The high repute gained by Henry Ward should not be allowed to obscure the notable service of his talented brothers. Edward, especially, was a vigorous underminer of theological ruins and in his *Age of Conflict* and *Age of Concord* sought through his doctrine of pre-existence to restore the conceptions of human freedom and divine justice which Calvinism had obscured.

it was his nature to love a man in his sins for the sake of helping him out of them" and when he felt that "nothing could praise Him enough for the revelation of such a nature as that in the Lord Jesus Christ." [1] From that time on Beecher, like Paul, had his "glorying in Christ Jesus in things pertaining to God." [2] Christ filled his horizon — to its infinite enlargement. He saw God, man, life, nature, history, futurity, everything, through Christ.

It is customary to regard Beecher as first and last a preacher and not at all as a theologian. Such a view of him is partial and inadequate. It is true that his pulpit was his throne. He was first of all a preacher. And yet there was as much theology in Beecher's little finger as in the loins of the average popular preacher. It was theology of his own stamp, yet by no means vagrant or erratic or out of touch with "the faith once delivered to the saints," — and kept by them only on condition of its being put to usury. Like Bushnell, he was an intuitive rather than a reflective or constructive thinker. He divined his own mission when he said that for many years he had been "hauling bricks

[1] Lyman Abbott and others: *Henry Ward Beecher*, p. 36.

[2] Rom. 15 : 17.

for the new theology." His bricks have proved sound and serviceable and have been built as lively stones into a spiritual temple.

X

If one wishes for a characteristic expression of Beecher's theology, as it flowed pulsing and harmonic from his soul, let him read his statement of belief made to the New York and Brooklyn Association of Ministers upon the occasion of his withdrawal from that body on account of suspicions of his orthodoxy.[1] Here is something unique in the history of American theology. The report of the event states that Beecher seated himself on the platform and in a familiar yet eloquent way poured out his whole soul to his hearers. "Beginning in a conversational tone and never raising his voice very high, the speaker soon passed over the negative side of his subject and began to set forth his affirmative beliefs. As these gradually led him to recall his own personal and inward experiences, he seemed to lose consciousness of his audience. . . . He was carried away by one of those very inspirations which he was describ-

[1] Reported in *The Christian Union;* republished in Lyman Abbott's *Henry Ward Beecher*, p. 479.

ing and when he spoke of the revelation of Christ to himself as one who loved men because they needed love, his face underwent a marvelous change; it seemed transparent with a radiant light."

"Spiritual Barbarism" was the subject upon which he had been announced to speak and he instanced among other forms of it the chapters in the Westminster Confession concerning decrees, election, reprobation, as exhibiting "extraordinary specimens of *spiritual barbarism*." From this, after alluding to the suspicions of his orthodoxy and the reasons for them, he passed on to present a statement of his positive beliefs. He prefaced it with a frank comment concerning the relation of his theology to his own temperament:

> I am impetuous. I am intense at times on subjects that deeply move me. I feel as though all the ocean were not strong enough to be the power behind my words, nor all the thunders that were in the heavens, and it is of necessity that such a nature as that should give such intensity at times to parts of doctrine as to exaggerate them when you come to bring them into connection with a more rounded out and balanced view.

Then came a gleam of light upon his early experience:

I was sympathetic by nature, I was loving, I was mercurial, I was versatile, I was imaginative. I was not a poet executively, but sympathetically. I was in union with the whole universal life and beauty of God's world and with all human life. My earliest religious training was at home. My father's public teaching may be called alleviated Calvinism. Even under that the iron entered my soul. There were days and weeks in which the pall of death over the universe could not have made it darker to my eyes than those in which I thought, "If you are elected you will be saved, and if you are not elected you will be damned, and there is no hope for you."

Following this rehearsal of his early experience, he gave a description of the impression of theology which he formed in his student days, which he described as an "abyss of whirling controversies that seemed to me to be filled with all manner of evil things, with everything but Christ." Then, on that memorable day "whose high sun and glowing firmament and waving trees are vivid yet" came his revelation of Christ "as being God because He knew how to love a sinner." Christ thus became the center of his preaching.

I chopped a little of the regular orthodox theology, that I might sprinkle it with the meal of the Lord Jesus Christ. But my horizon grew larger and larger in that one idea of Christ.

Emerging upon a more detailed doctrinal statement he took up the question, "What doctrines are fundamental to the formation of Christian character and to its complete development?" — a test of a sound theology which the dogmatic theologian has not often thought to apply. The first of such doctrines he finds to be that of a Personal God:

> Not seeable, not known by the senses, the full circuit of His being not discerned except by moral intuition, by the range of susceptibility, when the down shining of the Holy Ghost comes to me I know by an evidence within myself that is unspeakably more convincing to me than eye or hand or ear can be, that there is a God and that He is my God.

Other fundamental Christian doctrines as he outlines them are freshly and vitally conceived and by no means out of harmony with historic Christian doctrine. He affirms belief in the Trinity as "not contrary either to reason or the analogies of nature"; in Christ, as "God manifest in the flesh"; in the Holy Spirit, "universal, constant, imminent"; in Providence; Miracles, "possible now" but "real in the times gone by"; in Regeneration; Inspiration of the Bible as "the record of the steps of God in revealing Himself and His will to man";

in Atonement, as in Christ himself, and not a philosophy of His nature or work; and in Future Punishment as involved in "the nature of the consequences of transgression."

There is reality here, refreshing freedom from cant and commonplace. The whole is consistently, intensely, yet not narrowly Christocentric. This concentration of emphasis upon Christ appears with peculiar vividness in these words concerning prayer:

> I cannot pray to the Father except through Christ; I pray to Christ. I must. The way the Spirit of God works with me makes it necessary that I should have something I can clasp, and to me the Father is vague. I believe in a Father but the definition of Him in my vision is not to me what the portraiture of Christ is. Though I say Father, I am thinking of Christ all the time. That is my feeling, that is my life, and so I have preached, so I have taught those that came from Unitarian instruction — never asking them to a technical argument or proof, but simply saying, "You say you can pray to the Father, but cannot to Christ. You are praying to Christ; you don't know it. That which you call Father is that which is interpreted in Christ."

It would seem impossible that any association of Christian ministers could accept a resignation from its membership based upon

such a statement as this, especially as it was made "in the greatest love and sympathy" and only in order that this magnanimous soul might not lay upon anyone else the responsibility of his views. Nor was the Association guilty of such action. It asked him to reconsider and withdraw his resignation. The incident is illustrative of the theological situation at the time, as well as of the extent of Beecher's service in vitalizing and expanding American theology.

The point at which Beecher did most to bring the mind of the Church into line with the advance of thought was probably that at which theology seemed to conflict with evolution,—whose advent he hailed with enthusiastic hospitality. It would be difficult to parallel the opportunity, or the skill with which it was used, afforded to this teacher of the people when, on the 6th of January, 1883, he gave for the first time his lecture on "Evolution and Revelation" in crowded Cooper Union Hall. It was a sagacious and broad-minded interpretation of evolution, defined as "the teaching of the divine method of creation as gradual," in terms of its religious and theological implications and values. Such popular expositions of theology may not

have done much to convince the scribes and pharisees, but they helped greatly to save religion from going down with the sinking of decadent forms of doctrine, in the minds of those who were watching to see how Christianity would adjust itself to the new age.

The greatness of Henry Ward Beecher will not be fully understood until he is recognized as, in the words of Phillips Brooks, "a great leader in the theological world, believing in the Divine Christ and in eternal hope for mankind," as well as "a great preacher, a great leader, a great patriot, a great man." [1] The freedom and force with which he uttered himself upon subjects held to be dangerous and subversive by the obscurantists made it easier for every man in the pulpit to be true to his own conviction at a time when much depended upon the readiness of theology to leave her "low-vaulted past" and build "more stately mansions" for the soul.

XI

Next to Bushnell and Beecher, the two most liberalizing and far-reaching voices in American theology were probably those of William E.

[1] A. V. G. Allen: *Life of Phillips Brooks*, vol. II, p. 646.

Channing (1780–1842) in an earlier day and Phillips Brooks (1835–1893) in a later — both outside of the orthodox ranks, yet both deriving from its lineage and sharing to the full its noble heritage of intellectual and moral strength.

Channing was a great ethical reformer and doctrinal purifier. He was like fuller's soap and a refiner's fire to the orthodox theology of his day. Yet his mission was that of liberation from the narrower into the larger religious truth rather than a constructive contribution to theology. There was one great truth of which he was the outstanding prophet,— the dignity of human nature. His unrivaled emphasis upon human worth has now become the recognized bulwark of his title to a lasting place in American theology, though it was not, in essence, so unprecedented as it is often regarded. Channing's conception of human nature is indicated in these words:

> Am I asked for my conception of the dignity of a human being? I should say that it consists, first, in that spiritual principle called sometimes the reason, sometimes the conscience, which, rising above what is local and temporary, discovers immutable truth and eternal right, which in the midst of imperfect things, conceives of perfection, which is universal and important, standing in direct opposition to the

partial, selfish principles of human nature; which says to me with authority that my neighbor is as precious as myself and his rights as sacred as my own; which commands me to receive all truth, however it may war with my pride, and to do all justice, however it may conflict with my interest; and which calls me to rejoice with love in all that is beautiful, good, holy, happy, in whatever being these attributes may be found. This principle is a ray of divinity in man.[1]

Remote as this is from the language of Jonathan Edwards and Samuel Hopkins, it reveals an underlying union both with them and with Bushnell and Beecher and their successors. For these all believed, in some sense, in a "ray of divinity" imparting eternal worth to human nature. Edwards and Hopkins called it "the Holy Spirit," Bushnell and Beecher the "Logos" or "Word," others "the Eternal Christ," while Channing left it so unattached and vague as to be readily confused with man's own nature, conceived as isolated and independent. Therefrom, in the hands of later Unitarians who failed to link our higher nature with even "a ray of divinity," issued a new type of rationalism from which Unitarianism has found it hard to recover. Yet, despite limitations in discriminative

[1] John W. Chadwick: *William Ellery Channing*, pp. 248, 249.

and constructive power, Channing was undoubtedly one of the greatest leaders in genuine theological progress, especially on ethical lines, whom American Christianity has produced.[1]

Phillips Brooks coming so much later than Channing belongs among the liberated as well as the liberators. He was the consummate flower of the Pilgrim faith, blooming late, after it had struck its roots deep into the harsh New England soil and had weathered the storms of trial and controversy and been liberalized by the slow processes of hard thinking and noble living. In its serener years this virile New England faith, with its asperities and austerities mellowed but its vitality unimpaired, issued in this peerless son of Pilgrim seed. The blood of John Cotton flowed in his veins. His parents had passed through the icy intellectual invigoration of Unitarianism into the æsthetic warmth and symbolism of that church which his ancestors had renounced for its tyrannies and "mummeries" but which now,

[1] The writer regrets that necessary limitations prevent his including an account of the contribution of American Unitarianism as a whole to religious progress. It has, however, received ample treatment, as, e.g., in George Willis Cooke's *Unitarianism in America*. See, also, the present writer's "The Pilgrim Tercentenary and Theological Progress," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. XI, July, 1918.

purified and humbled, afforded nourishment and opportunity to his exuberant genius. Bishop Brooks, too, was intuitional, mystical, Christ-centered, in his theology; yet with a definite, unified, intellectual framework for his faith. In his Bohlen lectures he summarized the characteristics of Christianity thus:

> A poetic conception of the world we live in, a willing acceptance of mystery, an expectation of progress by development, an absence of fastidiousness that comes from a sense of the possibilities of all humanity and a perpetual enlargement of thought from the arbitrary into the essential — these, then, I think, are the intellectual characteristics which Christ's disciples gathered from their Master.[1]

These are the characteristics which this liberalized Puritan himself manifested in all the unassuming splendor and scope of his wide-reaching influence.

Many notable liberators of American theology, in various Christian communions — several of them quite early — prepared the way for the constructive work which was to follow: liberals like Charles Chauncy, early critic of revivalism and advocate of Universalism[2]

[1] *The Influence of Jesus*, p. 258.

[2] See Williston Walker: *Ten New England Leaders*.

(1705–1787); radicals like Theodore Parker (1810–60), who crashed through the older doctrines with ponderous blows, heedless of who or what suffered, yet who had also his large and positive convictions; extremists like Hosea Ballou (1771–1852), aflame with zeal against the doctrine of endless punishment; mystics like Emerson, who diffused catholicity and "nature" so impartially that it became not a little difficult to tell where faith leaves off and naturalism begins, yet whose influence has been a vast spiritualizing force; preachers, like Leonard Swing, and scholars, like Ezra Abbott and Joseph H. Thayer who dethroned the idol of a static, inerrant scripture that the voice of the Spirit might again be heard.[1]

XII

Outside of ecclesiastical circles and controversies has been also a company of teachers and writers whose influence has worked noiselessly but powerfully to liberate and liberalize theology: the representatives of philosophy, science, and literature. It will be impossible,

[1] Other leaders of an advancing theology are referred to in chapter VII.

manifestly, to do more than touch upon their contribution here.

Philosophy has had a far greater influence upon theology than the latter has ever realized. The philosophical and theological realms lie very close to one another. Interest in the one flows over into the other. Theology was the early pathway to philosophy.[1] It is worthy of note that so many American philosophers were from the ranks of the ministry, among them Jonathan Edwards, greatest of our philosophers, Samuel Johnson, the chief representative of Berkeleyanism in this country, James Marsh, John Witherspoon, R. W. Emerson, James McCosh, Noah Porter, Laurens P. Hickok, Joseph Torrey, Henry A. P. Torrey, Julius H. Seelye, Charles W. Shields, George T. Ladd. Mark Hopkins was a licensed preacher, George H. Howison and George H. Palmer studied at theological seminaries, and Borden P. Bowne was both lay preacher and theologian. These men were almost without exception idealists and they, and most other American

[1] "To the interest of the people (of America) in theology has been due a dominant tendency in thought, as well as in fact, in large measure, that we have any philosophy at all." A. C. Armstrong: "Philosophy in the United States," *Educational Review*, June, 1895, p. 3.

philosophers up to the close of the nineteenth century, including Josiah Royce and William James, have been vitally in league with Christianity and have greatly influenced religious thought in the direction of intellectual vigor and breadth.

XIII

As an instance of the close relation between philosophical and religious thought in America one may cite James Marsh [1] (1794–1842), president and professor of philosophy of the University of Vermont, the most idealistic and stimulating teacher of philosophy of his day in America. President Marsh was a Platonist and Kantian, but above all a most ardent and loyal disciple of Coleridge. There are few as fine examples of intelligent and effective discipleship in the history of philosophy as that of Marsh for the English thinker whom he never saw and who never gave him the slightest recognition. He introduced Coleridge to American readers through the "Aids to Reflection" which he published at Burlington in 1829 (second edition 1840) accompanied by his well-

[1] See *Memoir and Remains of James Marsh*, edited by Joseph Torrey; also J. W. Buckham: "James Marsh and Coleridge," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1904.

known "Preliminary Essay." [1] It was a copy of Marsh's Coleridge, in all probability, of which Dr. Munger wrote: "It may almost be said that it is to this book we are indebted for Bushnell"; [2] and, "This book stood by him to the end and in old age he confessed greater indebtedness to it than to any other book save the Bible." [3] Emerson, too, and the "Transcendentalists" were more indebted to Coleridge than to any other modern philosopher. An influence almost as great was exerted by the "Aids" upon a number of other of the most thoughtful of American theologians and ministers, including such contrasted minds as James Freeman Clarke and W. G. T. Shedd, and through Marsh and Bushnell Coleridge spoke to Washington Gladden and others and through them to the people; so that Coleridge may be

[1] It would be a mistake to suppose that because Marsh made Coleridge his *persona* he has no word of his own. On the contrary he infused into his students the "spiritual philosophy" through which the reign of the prevailing Lockean materialism in America was broken. Marsh also helped to introduce a more intelligent idea of the Bible by publishing a translation of Herder's *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*. The "Preliminary Essay" is republished in the new "Bohn" Coleridge.

[2] *Horace Bushnell*, p. 46.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 47. "It was this work which did most to introduce the modified German philosophy into our country" (Woodbridge Riley: *American Thought*, p. 170).

said to be *the* philosopher of the progressive school of theology in America. This does not necessarily mean that American philosophy and theology owe their idealism and intuitivism to Coleridge but rather that they found in him their philosophical exponent and authority.

James Marsh was the type and forerunner of a succession of philosophical teachers in this country who linked philosophy and theology in close kinship. It would be difficult to overestimate the idealizing and broadening influence upon religious thought in America of these men, occupying the chairs of "moral and intellectual philosophy" in the older colleges and universities during the nineteenth century. Many of the finest and ablest young men entering the professions, especially the ministry, during those years were impelled and governed by the high ideals of truth and life imparted by such men as Noah Porter at Yale, James McCosh at Princeton, Francis Bowen, Josiah Royce and G. H. Palmer at Harvard, Mark Hopkins and John Bascom at Williams, Charles E. Garman at Amherst, Laurens P. Hickok at Union College, Joseph and Henry Torrey at Vermont University, Borden P. Bowne at Boston University, George S. Morris at Johns Hopkins,

George H. Howison at the University of California. Much of the same philosophical idealism was infused into the ideals and methods of the public schools of the country by that dynamic educational idealist, Commissioner William T. Harris. Students going out from classrooms in which ethics and theism of a high order were taught were not disposed to content themselves, or allow others to be contented, with crude and contradictory theological ideas. Indeed these philosophical teachers were theologians as well as philosophers and while they did not take up the distinctive Christian doctrines as such, their discussions were largely concerned with the same problems as those of theology.[1]

XIV

To the liberating influence of philosophy upon religious thought should be added that of natural science, as taught by such scientists as Louis Agassiz, Asa Gray, Joseph Le Conte, Nathaniel Shaler, J. M. Tyler, and William North Rice. John Fiske, in his "The Idea of God," and "The Destiny of Man," contributed

[1] Studies by the writer of the contributions of two of these philosophers, Josiah Royce and G. H. Howison, to religious thought may be found in *The Harvard Theological Review*, vols. VIII and IX.

largely to this influence. Such men, of large mental vision and deep Christian faith, helped inestimably to avert the threatened conflict between science and theology. Not yet has the Church come to realize how much she owes to men of natural science for what they have indirectly contributed to the rectification and enlargement of theology.

Literature, too, has instilled her humane and broadening views into religious thought. Poetry, especially, has taught the essentials of Christian doctrine with a subtle and persuasive grace that has quietly robbed the creeds of their rigors and inhumanities. One need only instance the influence of John G. Whittier who, like Tennyson in England, has done as much if not more than any theologian to ring out "the ancient forms of party strife" and to ring in "the Christ that is to be."

Many of our novelists, too,— one need only mention, as an example, Hawthorne, lineal but emancipated son of Puritan ancestry,— have not only liberated but deepened American religious thought. So, too, have essayists like Lowell, Curtis, Holmes, and, in their own way, certain of those subtle but potent molders of public opinion, the editors. One cannot but think with

gratitude of the humanizing of theology, direct or indirect, exerted by such men as Samuel Bowles, William Hayes Ward, and Henry Mills Alden, the latter the author of that rare work of mystical theology, "God in His World."

Although in the following pages attention is turned chiefly to a definite line of progress and a single school of American religious thought, it should not be forgotten that through many minds and means, "by diverse portions and in diverse manners," the larger revelation comes.

CHAPTER II

THEODORE T. MUNGER

THEODORE THORNTON MUNGER

1830. March 5. Birth in Bainbridge, N.Y.
1847. Entered Yale College.
1851. Graduated from Yale College.
1855. Entered Andover Theological Seminary.
1856. February 6. Ordained pastor of Village Church, Dorchester, Mass.
1864. January 6. Installed pastor of Centre Church, Haverhill, Mass.
1864. October 12. Married in Haverhill, Elizabeth K. Duncan, who died October 3, 1886.
1871. June 14. Installed pastor of Eliot Church, Lowell, Mass.
1875. Went to California in search of health.
1875. Organized Congregational Church, San José, Cal.
1877. December 11. Installed pastor of Congregational Church of North Adams, Mass.
1885. November 19. Installed pastor of United Church, New Haven, Conn.
1887. Made Fellow of Yale University.
1889. March 5. Married Harriet King Osgood of Salem, Mass.
1898. Lecturer at Harvard University.
1901. Made Pastor Emeritus of United Church.
1904. Received degree of Doctor o f Divinity from Harvard University.
1905. Elected member of American Institute of Arts and Letters.
1908. Received degree of Doctor of Divinity from Yale University.
1910. January 11. Death in New Haven.
1910. November 1. Dedication of Memorial Tablet in Woolsey Hall, Yale University.

CHAPTER II

THEODORE T. MUNGER

THE NEW THEOLOGY DEFINED AND RELATED

FOLLOWING the pioneers of progressive religious thought in America came a company of constructive thinkers who built upon their foundations, deepened their insights, and extended their conclusions, thus constructing what is termed, rather loosely, the "New Theology." Among these none fulfilled a more courageous and benign service than "the New Haven seer," Theodore T. Munger.[1]

I

The names of Bushnell and Munger are closely linked in their service to religious life and thought. It was Bushnell who prepared the way for Munger and who gave him his chief inspiration and guidance; and he in turn repaid

[1] For a full and sympathetic account of Dr. Munger's life and work see *Theodore Thornton Munger: New England Minister*, by Professor Benjamin W. Bacon. Yale Press, 1903. The title "seer" was given him by Dr. George A. Gordon in a memorial sermon at the unveiling of the tablet in his memory in the United Church, New Haven, January 15, 1911. The sermon is printed in full in the above biography (pp. 377–398).

the debt by becoming the sympathetic and illuminating biographer and interpreter of Bushnell.

The two thinkers, bound together by a deep and vital intellectual and spiritual consanguinity, were yet in many respects in marked though supplemental contrast. Bushnell was original, rugged, creative; Munger discerning, judicious, interpretative. Bushnell lacked carefulness and discrimination in his thinking, Munger was a master of reflection and discrimination. Bushnell's thought plunged on like a cataract, swift, forceful, eloquent; Munger's flowed like a stately river through cultivated meadows, ordered, beautiful, satisfying. Bushnell carried his point by being carried away with it; Munger by means of a clarifying and convincing moderation. Bushnell left his work in rough, half-hewn blocks whose design, though unfinished, bears the marks of being struck out by genius; Munger chiseled these into perfect symmetry and set them in due and beautiful order.

The disciple's biography of his master is a rare piece of literary portrait painting, but it is more than that. It is an explication of the fundamental meaning and import of Bushnell's thought in a proportion and a sequence such as

its originator could hardly himself have shaped.[1] Thus the later thinker continued and supplemented the work of the earlier in a true apostolic succession.

There was much not only in Bushnell's thought but in the whole theological movement of the later nineteenth century that was implicit, undeveloped, unrelated. Dr. Munger, more quickly and sympathetically than any other of its exponents, understood and defined it. If the assertion did not savor too much of the outworn theology which it was his mission to help supplant, it might be said that he was "foreordained" to further the newer religious thought. Birth, training, disposition, all conspired to make him both a natural and a progressive Christian. He was a typical instance, a living demonstration, of Bushnell's "Christian Nurture." On his father's side a descendant of John Eliot, saintliest of the early apostles of Massachusetts, and on his mother's, offspring of a long line of Connecticut ministers, he was begotten and cradled in New England piety.

The home into which he was born, March 5, 1830, was one of genuine and unpretentious

[1] *Horace Bushnell: Preacher and Theologian* (1899).

faith, untroubled by overmuch conventional theology. "As for Eve and wicked children and sin as a crime of nature," he wrote, "I was brought up in the midst of it, but never did I hear or imbibe from my parents a teaching nor a suggestion on the subject." [1] As a boy he loved to be alone on the hills and "lose himself in the thought of God." [2] Yet, bathed as were the hills for him at times in the tender light of mysticism they were as often swept by the clarifying winds of intellectualism.

At Yale College, which he entered in 1847, he was a reader rather than a close student, — upright, thoughtful, reverent, but not closely in touch with the conventional religious activities of the students. As a theological student at Yale Divinity School, and afterward for a brief time at Andover, he was observant and well-poised. While he had great admiration for the peerless N. W. Taylor as a logician and teacher, he could not, as Bushnell before him could not, accept his ironclad system. During his theological course he was quietly doing his own thinking and it carried him farther and farther from his doctrinal heritage into a

[1] Bacon: *Theodore Thornton Munger*, p. 12.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

broader and sunnier faith. In short, here was a high-minded, free, unfettered son of the church, of the moral-intellectual type — if one insists upon classifying men by types — who grew up into the religious life as naturally as a tree planted in the courts of the Lord. Repelled by the commonplace and conventional religion about him, he went deeper and learned in clear self-reliance "to approve the things that are excellent" — and those only. The ministry attracted him because of its double opportunity of service and self-development. He was not ambitious. "All I hope," he wrote to his mother on the threshold of his ministry, "is to find some small country congregation whose wants I can supply as a teacher of God's word" [1] — yet he was resolved to make the most of his high calling. The authors to whom, as his thinking developed, he owed most were beside Bushnell, Maurice and Frederick Robertson, to whom he was drawn by an unerring spiritual instinct. There was nothing conspicuous in the opening of his ministry. It was only slowly and by degrees that he came forward as one of the clearest and most convincing representatives of the newer theological thinking.

[1] Bacon: *Theodore Thornton Munger*, p. 79.

II

When we ask what it was in this quiet unpretentious minister that gave him his unique influence as an exponent of the New Theology, we find that it was due mainly to two causes. The first was his determination to break through the chains of theological conservatism with which the champions of orthodoxy were trying to bind the pulpit of his denomination in his day, and the second was the efficacy of the means which he used for the purpose. In the crusade in behalf of freer and broader religious thought he formed one of a group of unusually able men, among whom were Egbert C. Smyth, Newman Smyth, Washington Gladden, William J. Tucker, George A. Gordon, George Harris, Lyman Abbott, William Hayes Ward, Alexander McKenzie, James G. Vose, Daniel Merriman and others, — all of them taking part in the American Board and Andover controversies later to be described. The principle which Dr. Munger — and all of this group of men — was most concerned to secure was that so well expressed in the title of his well-known volume "The Freedom of Faith" (1883). For this freedom of thought and utterance he

contended vigorously before church councils, in the pulpits of the churches which he served, and through the press. It cost him dark days and painful experiences, but he never wavered in purpose or conviction.

In this battle for doctrinal freedom he was as outspoken, courageous and aggressive as he was considerate and magnanimous. In all of his conduct toward his opponents he was governed by the first of the "Six Principles" of Frederick Robertson, which he adopted early in his ministerial life, i.e., "the establishment of positive truth instead of the negative destruction of error." In conformity to this principle he made it a rule not to answer attack. These tactics of construction instead of destruction, of persuasiveness instead of pugnacity, of patience instead of retaliation, won him constantly increasing regard and influence, and everywhere opposition melted away before friendliness and suspicion gave place to confidence. It was to his own honor and that of his cause that he won the battle, not only for himself but for the New Theology, by a spirit and a method in harmony with the doctrines which he advocated and the religion which he confessed.

III

The chief means by which Dr. Munger won his end and accomplished so large service for the New Theology was his literary art, an art which he made a sacred instrument of truth. The separation between literature and theology had been as wide and painful as the traditional one between text and sermon. Much worthy theology had gone a-begging because clothed in the garments of heaviness instead of the robes of praise. In him appeared one of the few theologians who have mastered the art of using pure, finished, attractive, persuasive prose. Because of this finely wrought literary vesture, clothing his free thought, his deep insight, and his tender human sympathy in the light and color with which nature has taught the Christian to adorn his doctrines in all things, his volumes of sermons early took their place among the best productions of American literature. By virtue of this grace they found their way into the palace of the Queen of England,[1] the libraries of scholars and the sanctums of editors as well as into humble

[1] Queen Victoria wrote of the "encouragement" and "strength" she had received from *The Freedom of Faith*. See Bacon, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

homes where the love of beauty is wedded to the love of truth. Thus truth entered in at lofty as well as lowly doors, even though clothed in the suspected garb of the "New Theology."

Of "The Freedom of Faith" the British "Quarterly Review" said: "The sermons deserve to rank with the noblest productions of modern times; they have the large sympathies of Beecher, the exegetical tact of Robertson, the literary finish of Vaughan, and the daring of Maurice." Of "The Appeal to Life" "The Literary World," of London, said, "For purposes of inspiration and of furnishing very high models of a Divine art, we know of but few which attain to their lofty pitch of excellence." The literary style of this unassuming, unadvertised preacher, who never attracted crowds yet who through his publications reached thousands where the popular preacher reaches hundreds, was in no wise arresting nor conspicuous. It was neither florid nor sonorous nor scintillating. It was simply lucid, sober, well-ordered, expressive English — lit frequently by a flash of captivating insight and beauty — free from extravagance but never lapsing into commonplace, "fit and fair and

simple and sufficient." Perhaps its rarest merit — sorrowfully rare in sermonic literature — is its resolute sincerity. It possesses that fine distinction, moral as well as artistic, that belongs only to the very best literature, of expressing the true intention of the author both accurately and amply.

One of the best evidences of Dr. Munger's thorough mastery of literary art is the fact that his sermonic style is *sermonic*, cast in the form — not of the sermon as it is usually heard, careless, inchoate, without form and void (perhaps because the Spirit has not brooded over it) — but of the true sermon, possessing these peculiar notes of elevation and intimacy, of strength and tenderness which give to the sermon its own unique place and possibilities as a form of literature. Dr. Munger knew well how to use other literary forms, especially the essay — and it is instructive to note how his style varies when he adapts it to the essay — but it was the sermon which provided him his chosen and perfected literary form.

One of the minor but marked excellences of Dr. Munger as a sermonizer is his use of apt, vivid and luminous imagery. Analogy, illustra-

tion, description, leap to his aid. Take, for example, the following characterization of the book of the Acts, in the introduction of the sermon on "The Reception of New Truth": "There is in this book of the Acts, as in Homer and in all great histories, a wonderful sense of motion. One feels as if sailing in a great ship, under a bounding breeze, out of a narrow harbor, into the wide sea. . . . So in reading this history it is no longer Judea but the world, no longer Jerusalem but Rome and Spain also; no more one chosen people but all nations." Or turn to the striking picture of the merely æsthetic life, in the sermon on "God our Shield" in which he describes the irresponsible type of living as "reminding one of the curtain of a theatre whereon is painted a careless youth touching the strings of a lute for listless girls amongst flowers and fountains, while behind it is Hamlet rehearsing his great question, 'To be or not to be,' or Lear struggling with the tempest and his own heart." That is not theatrical, but dramatic, as well as sermonic. Not often does one meet such a description of the poise of Christ as this in the noble sermon "The Witness of Experience": "His words flame with divine indignation, but it is the still

heat of a sun; his emotions are deep, but their expression is like the wheels in Dante's vision that seem to sleep on their axles from the very swiftness of their turning."

Such comparisons and metaphors light up a sermon with singular charm; yet they are only the lamps that serve to illuminate wide vistas of uplifting thought and deep mines of wisdom and truth and timely counsels of perfection. No one can read such sermons without being conscious that they must have cost their author long and patient work — as his biographer assures us they did. It is easy to believe that before beginning them the writer was wont to put himself in touch with the "Christ-consciousness" that he might meet his task aright.[1]

IV

Turning now, after too long delay, to Dr. Munger's interpretation of the New Theology, we find ourselves in possession not only of his sermons as its vehicle but of a carefully framed and mature statement of the substance of it as

[1] Mention should also be made of that sane, high-minded, and helpful book of counsel to youth which has given guidance to so many young lives, *On the Threshold*, and of its companion volume, *Lamps and Paths*.

he conceived it, in the extended introduction to "The Freedom of Faith." This introduction, written so early as 1883, stands in some respects unparalleled as a summary of the "New Theology" in America. The first characteristic which strikes one in reading it is its restrained and irenic tone. It is no offhand polemic nor hectic *pronunciamento* but an unbiased and sincere endeavor to bring out the real motive and meaning of the movement. He refuses to admit that the New Theology is really new, declaring that "it allies itself even with the older rather than the later theologies and finds in the early Greek theology conceptions more harmonious with itself than those in the theology shaped by Augustine."[1] He discerns that the New Theology consists not so much in a new set of doctrines as in a new attitude and spirit. It renounces the *systemism* of the Old Theology with all its works, especially its over-reliance upon logic. Not that it "abjures logic" in the sense of a "harmony of doctrines" but that it recognizes also "mystery" and "sentiment" and "hope" as all belonging

[1] In this contention he is clearly indebted to Professor A. V. G. Allen to whom he refers in a footnote and whose volume, *The Continuity of Christian Thought*, was one of the chief contributions to the New Theology.

within the sphere of truth. The New Theology claims also "a broader use of the reason" than the Old Theology, meaning by reason "man's whole inner being," a larger view of revelation, and a freer "more natural" use of Scripture. It "seeks to replace an excessive individuality by a true view of the solidarity of the race." It "recognizes a new relation to natural science" and claims for itself "a wider study of man."

In nothing does the penetration and wisdom of Dr. Munger's mind show itself more clearly than in his attitude toward evolution, by whose almost dramatic emergence many in his day were being swept away into an exuberance of acclamation and others into a paralysis of doubt. In contrast to both of these attitudes he recognizes the aid which evolution offers to theology in helping it "to regain its forgotten theory of the divine immanence in creation," and yet he sees the danger of pan-evolutionism, lest matter come to be regarded as "inclusive of the spiritual," and the need of asserting "the reality of the spiritual as above the material, of force that is other than that lodged in matter."

Of the relation of the New Theology to specific doctrines, Dr. Munger says little. It

is significant of the abnormal viewpoint of his day that the only doctrine which he singles out in this statement for extended discussion is eschatology. In discussing it he first places emphasis upon the larger meaning of the word "eternal" and then raises well sustained objections to the whole conception of "probation," whether present or future, placing the emphasis where it belongs, upon life as education and only incidentally probation. Perhaps the strongest and most pertinent criticism of the Old Theology which he makes is that of its alienation from human life. "The Old Theology stands on a structure of logic outside of humanity. . . . It lifts man out of his manifold and real relations, out of the wide and rich complexity of actual life and carries him over into a mechanically constructed and ideal world — a world made up of five propositions, like Calvinism or some other such system — and views him only in the light of that world." Here speaks the humanist, the lover of truth and of the life more abundant. The New Theology, as he conceives it, means the broadening and humanizing of theology so that it may become a true science of man's relation to God and his world. Of this freer, larger Christianity

his sermons and essays form an expansive and worthy description. The very titles of his leading volumes, "The Freedom of Faith" and "The Appeal to Life," are an expression of the large and liberating Christian living — sane, serene, fruitful, optimistic — into which Dr. Munger had entered through the narrow gate that leads to life. Such a life would have been impossible save as he had reached it through Him through whom he went "in and out"; *in* to the deeper soul of things — and found it Fatherly — and *out* into the wide fields of human culture and fellowship.

In his serene and reflective later years Dr. Munger gave much thought to two subjects of great significance to theology: the relation of theology to the university and the kinship — "interplay" he termed it — of theology and literature. The fruit of his insights and reflections upon these and other themes appeared in articles contributed to "The Atlantic Monthly," "The Century Magazine," "The Outlook," and other periodicals and were later embodied in "Essays for the Day" (1904), a book whose colorless title fails to reflect the nature and

value of its contents. The first of these essays, "The Church: Some Immediate Questions," opens with a kindly yet critical explanation of the existence of the one hundred and forty-seven denominations of Christians in America — a phenomenon in which he sees, with extraordinary charity, not so much an indication of schism as of religious freedom and fertility. Various phases of literature and religion are discussed with great pertinence in these chapters, none with greater force and timeliness than the relation of theological education to the university. He is confident that theology cannot thrive apart from the university. The Theological Seminary finds no data for a scientific, not to say practical theism — the question of questions — until it searches it out and teaches it from evolution. Thus it finds ground for the truth that man has always sought for and in higher moments asserted, the divine immanence in all things and the like nature of God and man. If there is to be a theology in the future it will be found in this region, in connection with the university, which is to play a large part in its reconstruction; that is, theology will spring from the whole circle of human knowledge.[1]

[1] *Essays for the Day*, p. 20.

These are sagacious words, catholic and far-sighted. One feels their wisdom, though, like the writer, he may dissent from the final statement, holding that the theology of the future as of the past will spring not from "the whole circle of human knowledge" but rather from that inner experience which we call religious,— an experience in itself *sui generis*, but which requires for its interpretation and application all forms of knowledge. In other words, the individual experience of the profound realities of the spiritual world, mediated by the Christian community, is the fountainhead of theology; but for its explication theology needs contact with the whole sphere of human knowledge. For this reason theology needs to resort to the university, else it will stagnate.

As a matter of fact the university itself was the creation chiefly of the church. The University of Paris, the mother of European and thus of American universities, began as a school of theology, and theology long held the leading place in most of the great universities of Europe.[1] Nor was it by any means a mere dry-as-dust mechanical discipline but "the

[1] See J. W. Buckham: "The Study of Religion in the University," *Educational Review* (January, 1913).

architectonic science whose office it was to receive the results of all other sciences and combine them into an organic whole in so far as they had bearings on the supreme questions of the nature of God and of the universe and the relation of man to both." [1]

In our own country the two oldest colleges of New England, now among our greatest universities, Harvard and Yale, were founded chiefly for the education of the ministry. Theology, however, now holds but a vestige of her old-time glory in them. Still, there is a surviving bond between church and university in America which means much for both and which should not be allowed to decay. For the church to lose touch with the university, as there is no little danger of its doing to-day, would be a most serious disaster, and for theology to go her lonely way unfed and unstimulated and unsustained by the life of the university would mean inevitable deterioration. The university is indispensable to the church. No one saw this more clearly than did Dr. Munger, as the following words attest:

It is there the church must continually go to correct ancient mistakes, to measure the urgency

[1] Rashdall: *Universities of Europe*, vol. II, p. 215.

of new truths, to clear itself of entanglements when old and new conflict, to shut out the clamor of the mob howling for a new dogma or decrying an old one, to keep eye and ear open for fresh visions of God and new accents of the Holy Ghost, and above all for seeing to it that great matters are held in their due proportion, and that all matters worthy of attention are studied until they are brought into reasonable harmony with one another and so conduce to the one end of all study — truth. The university is thus the refuge of the churches for help in all those questions that perplex them. Such has been its function in all ages, and such it will continue to be. . . . The increasing necessity of the church is enlightenment, and for this we must look to the university. Nothing of value is being said to-day on theology or ecclesiastical usage that does not proceed from it or bear its stamp. But the university must be of the true Comenius type — based on nature and crowned with faith in God, balancing all attainable truth, and thus able to teach harmonious truths and true living. [1]

In harmony with this conviction of the need of a closer affiliation of church and university, Dr. Munger maintained that theological instruction should be carried on, not at isolated points, but only at university centers. In an address given at Yale Divinity School in 1902 and published in "The Outlook" he urged with great force that all theological education

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 45–47.

should be brought within the sphere of the university, "that its relations should be so close and vital as to fill its spirit, and that it might learn and adopt those careful and comprehensive habits of thought which are fostered by university life." He recognized the danger of the loss of moral enthusiasm in such a relation, but he held that this could be avoided and that the inner springs of the spiritual life could be kept filled at the university centers as well as elsewhere.

Those of us who were trained on old Andover Hill, or at Auburn, or Bangor, or at other seminaries similarly situated, will not readily relinquish the peculiar advantages in the comparative quiet and seclusion, the opportunity of concentration and reflection, afforded by the rural type of institution. The atmosphere of the university does not in all respects stimulate theological studies, as the theological professor who must hold his students to their especial subjects in competition with the crowded lectures of a great university very well knows. And yet, on the whole, university environment is *proving* the best for the study of theology. It contributes far more than it detracts. The scientific spirit and the philosophic outlook

may prove too expansive for the faith of some students, but they certainly dispel the *odium theologicum* and on the whole, and in the end, leave the student a better fitted as well as a broader man.

"Woe be to theology in the future if it holds back from the scientific method; and a heavier woe will fall upon the university if it is indifferent to that department of truth which is necessary to complete its circle." [1] The warning of this emphatic word of Dr. Munger is not to be overlooked. Indifference to the sphere of truth which theology represents creates a conspicuous vacuum in the life of many of our universities which science and philosophy and the humanities fail to fill, liberalizing as they are. The university needs the theological school to complete the circle of the higher studies by supplying those which have to do most directly with the ultimates of human life and destiny. Dr. Munger's plea that the two be kept in close touch needs strong and constant reiteration.

[1] *The Outlook*, vol. 70, p. 730.

VI

One of the most auspicious and progressive tendencies of modern theology is its increasing affiliation with literature. Under the influence of Protestant scholasticism, Puritan impoverishment, and its own pride of dominion, theology became isolated from the genial and life-giving influences of literature and had grown harsh and barren and repellent. To its own serious detriment it had become blind to the presence of genuine theological thought in the literature which the people read and love. In the latter nineteenth century — that period of spiritual renascence in English literature — Protestant theology began to awaken to the folly of its estrangement from *belles-lettres*. Such theologians as Samuel Harris, versed in literature as well as philosophy, and Augustus Strong began to surmise that literature has stores of wealth for theology which she was failing to realize, and the return to literature which they fostered has brought large gains to theology. It is true that in some cases the resort to literature has been too much of the nature of a mere marauding expedition into its rich fields to see what spoils could be captured to adorn the halls of

theology. Some theologians have been little more than spoilsmen. Others, however, have gone to literature out of pure and unfeigned love of it, and returned, not so much laden with spoils as having their own thought bathed in its dews, made redolent with its fragrance and winged with its persuasive accents. Thus the ancient kinship of theology and literature found in Origen and Augustine, Bonaventura and Dante has been, in part at least, reëstablished.

Few have done as much to restore to theology the aids and amenities of literature as Theodore T. Munger. He was himself, as we have seen, the possessor of genuine literary talent and patiently and sincerely cultivated it. He was from boyhood a lover of the best literature and came to see with increasing clearness the theological implications and values of the great masterpieces of literature. In a notable article in "The Atlantic Monthly," entitled "The Interplay of Christianity and Literature," he showed how rich and ennobling are the holdings of Christianity in this incomparable realm of life and expression.[1] If it were not so,

[1] See also M. H. Buckham: *The Very Elect;* "The Religious Influence of Literary Studies."

if the great creations of the spirit of literature were without theological character and implications, it would argue ill for the reality and worth of religion as well as of theology. As a matter of fact, many of the noblest and most vital interpretations of Christianity — and what are these but theology? — lie embedded in the world's great poems and essays and works of fiction. That fact Dr. Munger knew right well and helped others to discover. "The value of these restatements of Christianity," he wrote, "especially by the poets, is beyond estimate. They are the real defenders of the Faith, the prophets and priests whose succession never fails."

The unrecognized theological implications resident in a work of fiction are strikingly brought out in "Notes on the Scarlet Letter."[1] In Hawthorne's striking story, as he so clearly shows, there is a sensing of the true nature and effects of sin such as the customary theological treatise fails to touch.

Even if such treasures are in vessels, the grace of whose fashion exhibits no Christian legend or symbolism, they may be as truly Christian in character as if they were inscribed within and

[1] *Essays for the Day.*

without with the name of Christ. Such is Dr. Munger's reminder. For it is, as he points out, by no means merely in the openly and unqualifiedly Christian authors, like Milton and Tennyson and Browning, that the realities of Christian truth are to be found, but in many a writer not folded with the faithful. "The Christian value of an author is not to be determined by the fulness of his Christian assertion. There is, of course, immense value in the positive, full-statured believers like Dante and Bacon and Milton and Browning. Such men form the court from which there is no appeal. But Christianity is all the while in need of two things: correction of its mistakes and perversions and developments in the direction of its universality. None can do these two things so well as those who are partially outsiders. . . . In order to translate the natural into the divine, and to find a place for the divine in the natural, they who know the natural, and hold it even at some cost to the divine, must be employed." [1]

Such words as these fall like music upon ears that have long been closed, by reason of the din of theological polemic, to the voice of the spirit of Christianity as it speaks from the

[1] *Essays for the Day*, pp. 82, 83.

unordained lips of "secular" authors. They reveal something of the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian faith and reflect that liberating, expansive interpretation of religion which under the name of the "New Theology" Theodore Munger did so much to interpret and further,— to the advantage of all who love the freedom of faith and the abundance of life.

VII

When a just conception of the pervasive universality of Christian faith gets full recognition, the Greeks of to-day who are saying "we would see Jesus" — men and women from our universities and colleges who cannot be content with the platitudes and dogmatisms of a barren form of orthodoxy — will regain their confidence in Christianity. When they discover that the literature they have learned to love, which they had thought alien from Christ, is often redolent with His spirit, though not burdened with His name; when they learn that, as Dr. Munger has said, "for the most part the greater names in literature have been true to Christ, and it is the Christ in them that has corrected theology, redeeming it from dogma-

tism and making it capable of belief — not clear, perhaps, but profound," [1] they will see Him where He was before undiscerned. It was the office of this large-minded thinker, and those who shared his outlook, to link Christianity afresh with both the permanent and current interests of the human mind, thus regaining to a large extent the sympathies of young men and women whom a restricted view of life and religion, out of touch with modern education, had alienated from Christianity.

To portray and interpret America's greatest modern theologian; to aid potently in securing "the freedom of faith"; to discern the spirit of the "New Theology" and reveal it to itself; to help to recover to theology contact with the kindred domains of education and literature; — this was no common task. It was the high and rare service that Theodore T. Munger rendered to the religious life of America.

[1] *Essays for the Day*, p. 100.

CHAPTER III

GEORGE A. GORDON

GEORGE ANGIER GORDON

1853. January 2. Birth at Insch, Scotland.
1871. June 22. Sailed for United States.
1874. Entered Bangor Theological Seminary, graduating in 1887.
1877. June 20. Ordained pastor of Congregational Church, Temple, Me.
1877. Revisited Scotland.
1878. Entered Harvard University, graduating with honors in Philosophy, 1881.
1881. August 1. Installed pastor of Second Congregational Church, Greenwich, Conn.
1884. April 2. Installed pastor of Old South Church, Boston, Mass.
1886–90. Preacher to Harvard University; also 1906–09.
1888–1916. Preacher to Yale University.
1890. June 3. Married Susan Huntington Manning of Boston.
1893. Received degree of Doctor of Divinity from Bowdoin College and from Yale University; also from Harvard University in 1895.
1896. First Ingersoll lecturer, Harvard University.
1897–1909. Overseer of Harvard University; also 1910–17.
1900. Lowell Institute lecturer, Boston.
1901. Lyman Beecher lecturer, Yale University.
1903. Received degree of Doctor of Divinity fromColumbia University.
1908–17. Trustee of Andover Theological Seminary.
1908. Preacher at the Edinburgh Conference, International Congregational Council.
1909. Observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his pastorate of Old South Church.
1909. Nathanael W. Taylor lecturer, Yale University.
1915. Addressed National Council of Congregational Churches, New Haven, Conn., on "Our Conflict and Our Resources."
1918. President of Harvard Alumni Association.

CHAPTER III

GEORGE A. GORDON

THE NEW THEOLOGY UNIVERSALIZED

It is not customary to associate romance with the calling and election of a theologian; but if entrance, through strange and humble ways into a large place and a wide and beneficent service is not romance, it is something very like it. A poor lad, leaving his father's croft in Scotland for the beckoning opportunities of America, engaging at first in manual toil, then drawn by the summons of an imperative call to seek a training for the ministry, led by the consuming thirst for an ampler acquaintance with the master minds of the ages to Harvard University, thence, after long hesitation, to one of the leading pulpits of the land, where opportunity, responsibility, influence thrust themselves upon him; all this is romance — and more. It is the leading of the Divine Spirit. Hints of the tale, veiled in words of finest garb of modesty, appear here and there throughout

the self-revelation which escapes, almost unawares, from his overflowing cup. The full story awaits — let us hope — adequate recounting.

I

A significant fact of this life experience, for our purpose is that it made of this rarely endowed and richly trained mind an *American* theologian. George Angier Gordon was, to be sure, the gift to America *primus inter pares* of that fruitful mother of theologians, Scotland, but he soon became as wholly and wholeheartedly American as if born in the venerated city of which he has become almost as much a part as any one of the great succession of its ministry from John Cotton to Phillips Brooks.

The consciousness of this closeness of attachment to his adopted country, this grafting into the stock of her native thought, appears very clearly in the preface to the most important of his earlier volumes.[1] Consciously and conscientiously, as he there makes clear, he began his career as a theologian by confronting "questions perplexing the faith of our churches, — of which only one living in open communion in the heart of our American

[1] *The Christ of To-day*, p. vi.

Christianity can fully know." For the resolving of these questions, as well as the clue to their emergence, he went back, as he there states, to Jonathan Edwards and the great heritage of the New England theology into which he had come.

This identification with our Pilgrim faith and the quality and scope of his service as an interpreter and molder of the religious thought of the New World have made of George A. Gordon our third great American theologian. Jonathan Edwards, Horace Bushnell, George A. Gordon — this is the true American theological apostolic succession. This estimate may seem at present extravagant, but I am convinced the future will confirm it. N. W. Taylor and Edwards A. Park were greater as logicians and teachers, W. E. Channing was greater as an ethical reformer and prophet, Charles Hodge and W. G. T. Shedd were more learned, William N. Clarke has had wider influence in the field of irenics, Borden P. Bowne in that of philosophy, but in insight and breadth and total accomplishment none has equaled Dr. Gordon.

His attitude toward the New England theology began in mingled reverence and revolt;

reverence for the sinewy seriousness of its thought and the intensity of its realization of God, revolt — open, indignant, sustained — against the inhumanity and barrenness of its doctrines, a revolt which burned in his soul until it incited him to construct a theology upon which he could preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, the eternal gospel of the Son of God, to the modern man. Not, of course, that he was the pioneer in the construction of the newer and larger New England theology. Bushnell had already, as we have seen, laid the foundations, as a wise master-builder, and Gordon entered with full appreciation — though not without knowledge of its limitations — into the work of the great Connecticut thinker.[1] He came into close touch also with other virile minds working at the same task of theological reconstruction. With Dr. Munger especially he was in warm and helpful friendship and accord.[2] Nevertheless the author of "The Christ of To-day" has a richer endowment, an ampler equipment, as well as a larger field of influence,

[1] See e.g., his address at the unveiling of the memorial tablet to Dr. Munger in Bacon's *Theodore Thornton Munger* (p. 377), for his estimate of Bushnell.

[2] The above address reveals the closeness of the tie between them.

than either Bushnell or Munger or any other of the framers of the New Theology.

II

To understand Dr. Gordon's contribution to theology it is necessary, before outlining its content, to pause for a moment upon his conception of the nature and function of theology itself. The best and most complete statement of his view of theology is given in his Lyman Beecher lectures "Ultimate Conceptions of Faith" (1903), undoubtedly the noblest sketch of the function, scope, and relations of theology, next to Fairbairn's "Place of Christ in Modern Theology," in modern theological literature. In this volume Dr. Gordon makes full recognition of three sources essential to the formation of an adequate theology, lacking in almost all treatises of American theology before his time — and in most since, as well — history, philosophy, and experience.

In spite of the high purpose, logical acumen and intense industry of the New England Theology, this careful student of it perceived how detached and provincial it was. He saw clearly that no theology could be complete and commanding that did not keep faith not only

with the basal religious instincts and the principles of unity and order but also with the great developmental movement of Christian doctrine through the ages. Aware of this, he fitted himself to cope with the fundamental problems of the science of theology by acquainting himself, as far as possible, with its history. In that vast field, comprising centuries of laborious thought, though by no means a technical scholar, he early made himself well at home. With the passion for inclusiveness of vision that characterizes him, he swept the whole heavens of historical theology, detecting, with an insight that is little short of genius the truly great and constructive minds that have made Christian theology what it is. Very real and living these elect spirits became to him, especially Origen, Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards, N. W. Taylor, Butler, and Maurice. True, he leaves vast tracts of theological literature, particularly that of the mediæval period, almost unnoticed; but this is atoned for by the acute discernment with which he detects the most significant minds and the movements of largest import in the history of theology as a whole.

Yet competent as is his knowledge of historic

theology, far richer and more potent in his thinking is his knowledge of philosophy. Here he is not without an American predecessor in the eminent Yale theologian Samuel Harris; but the latter's philosophy sits far looser to his theology than does that of this pulpit theologian. Rare indeed is the theologian who has so keen a sense as Dr. Gordon of the pertinence of philosophy to his task. There have been many theologians who have been diligent plodders in philosophy but few who, like Coleridge and Maurice and James Marsh and Gordon, have so caught its spirit as to carry its ample air and wide horizons into the too often provincial realm of theology. He has the philosophic mind in singularly fruitful harmony with the theological and homiletical. He has drunk deep at the living fountains of philosophy, especially those flowing from the hills of Hellas. Plato is his chief master in the lore of the mind. If some one would extract from his writings his references to Plato, they would make a signal volume of Platoniana. If Plato is entitled to be regarded, as Edward Caird has called him, the "father of theology," the value of a sympathetic knowledge of one who has exercised so vast an influence upon

Christian thought will be understood.[1] When to this is added an almost equal appreciation of Aristotle the rarity of his philosophical equipment will be divined. It is a familiar saying that every thinker is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian. The saying is falsified, or at least exceptionalized, in the case of George A. Gordon, for he was born both Platonist and Aristotelian, or rather reborn, through the throes of a severe intellectual discipline.

If his study of the history of philosophy had been confined to these two masters alone, it would have been of eminent worth to his work, but it was not. It embraced a wide outlook over philosophy as a whole. The systems of Spinoza, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel are no salt, unplumbed, estranging seas to him. Of more worth, however than his knowledge of the history of philosophy is his penetration into its fundamental problems and their intimate relation to religious problems. Few philosophical idealists have equaled the power of application with which he has pressed home against every

[1] This attachment to Plato may be illustrated by the following incident: A question once arose between Dr. Gordon and a friend as to a point in the *Republic*, whereupon he pulled a copy, in the original, from his pocket and turned at once to the disputed passage. Those who to-day carry a work of Plato about with them are few.

form of materialism the truth that, take whatever view of the universe you choose, — call it matter or force or whatever you like,— you are still reading it in terms of the mind itself,— the only pathway by which we can get to nature being that of our own thought. Why not then construe our universe through that which is highest in us, rather than what is lower? Observe, too, with what pertinence and illumination he makes use of the logical principle of identity and difference in relating the humanity of Jesus to that of other men in his "The Christ of To-day." [1]

This is philosophy put to usury, not laid away in the napkin of ornamental lecture-room phrases, or buried in recondite treatises, but coined and put into the common currency of thinking men and women the world around. Yet if any one imagines that this student of the history of theology, this lover of Plato and Aristotle, rests his theology upon historic perspective and philosophic principle alone, he is quite wrong. He goes deeper than that by his own testimony: "The soul in Christian experience, resting upon God and open to his discipline, is the great generative source of the

[1] *The Christ of To-day*, p. 94 ff.

convictions that support the higher work of the world." [1] "It is the heart that makes the theologian." [2]

Yet experience, he points out, is not an individual affair only, it is also racial, social. In other words, it is the Christian consciousness that gives birth to Christian theology. Nor is it that alone. Its fountainhead lies deeper still. "Beneath human experience and filling it is the Holy Ghost." [3] Gordon, like Munger, constantly makes "the appeal to life." This for him is the test of truth, — sharp and subtle, — and not its test only but its verification. That which cannot be verified by answering to the needs of life cannot be known for certainty as truth.

This conviction of the fundamental place of experience in religion came to him as the deliverance from a period of unrest in his own quest for truth, of which he gives a rapid description under the transparent veil of the mental history of "a friend." It was a period, if not of storm and stress, at least of doubt and questioning.[4] It began during his life at Harvard, with the dawning of the conviction that religious truth,

[1] *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith*, p. 92.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 93. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 95. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

like that of science, must be amenable to reason and criticism, and continued until the opening of his first pastorate. At that time there came to him the realization of the *primacy of experience* as the only fundamental ground of a conviction that can endure the most severe testing of the critical reason.

III

That there was sore need of a reconstructed theology was clearer to no thinker of his time than to this man who understood the meaning and value of the past. His conviction of the inadequacy of the older theology and his conception of the lines upon which reconstruction should be carried on are admirably stated in three successive articles of permanent worth which should be republished in book form: "The New Orthodoxy and the Old" (1893), "The Collapse of the New England Theology" (1908), and "Some Things Worth While in Theology" (1910).

The first of these, written in an irenic vein, is a clear and impressive evaluation of that which is permanent and eternal in theology and an equally clear statement of that which is changing and in need of revision. The necessity

of a true balance between these "two great determinative ideas" is strongly urged. Preference is freely given to "the abiding side of the Christian faith"; but due recognition of the permanent, as is made clear, demonstrates all the more surely the necessity of progress, especially in view of the confusion and the seriousness of the issue with the opposing forces of the present age. "If the church could but know the wilderness of unbelief in which she is campaigning, if she could but guess at the boundless antagonisms in the centers where she is set, how eager her sympathies would become toward all sincere believers, how great her unity of spirit, how vast her bonds of peace, how completely healthy and exempt from all compulsions would be the flow of faith and power within her large and happy heart." [1] It is noteworthy that the term "New Orthodoxy" which Dr. Gordon here employs does not reappear in his writings, nor does he make use of the phrase "The New Theology." Neither designation, in fact, was adequate to the wealth of the larger views coming into recognition.

"The Collapse of the New England Theol-

[1] "The Contrast and Agreement between the New Orthodoxy and the Old," *The Andover Review*, vol. XIX, no. 109, p. 11.

ogy" is a piece of analytic and synthetic criticism which it would be difficult to match in the entire field of theological literature, brilliant in analysis, just in appraisal, unsparing in its exposure of defects, reverent and generous in appreciation of merits. In its searching flame the wood, hay, and stubble of the New England systems go up in a smoke as thick as the obscurity they had created; though the systematicians themselves are saved, yet so as by fire. Not only so, but there are left also the underlying foundations upon which they erected their inadequate structures. For this critic is anything but iconoclast and cannot condemn the old orthodoxy without paying tribute "to the surviving worth in it, to the eternal soul that we recognize all the more clearly that the old formalism in which it lived has passed away. This precious survival is both subjective and objective, a tradition of great men devoted to the supreme human interest and a cluster of shining and imperishable ideas." [1]

"Some Things Worth While in Theology," a lecture before the Harvard Summer School of Theology, in 1910, is a rare epitome of the

[1] "The Collapse of the New England Theology," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. I, no. 2, p. 154.

findings obtained by the sense of values in the sphere of theology. It is full of the swing and lilt of a strong mind rejoicing like David before the ark of the Lord. The things which seem to him worth while are: a just perspective, insight into the world of persons, originality, getting at the interior meaning of traditional ideas, the way of salvation, and the demonstration of the spirit — the principle of unity in the series being "the living soul of man in fellowship with other souls and with God." [1] The lecture closes with a noble plea for the inclusion of both intellect and sympathy, science and sentiment, in theology. "Between religion as a mindless product and religion as the issue of an irreverent mind, there is little to choose."

We are not shut in, however, to either alternative; we hear the call of the truly scientific intellect that loves facts, that lives in them, that seeks for reality in the suffering and achieving spirit, that finds it there as the miner discovers gold in the rock, that digs it and brings it forth, passes it through its thousand furnace fires, and presents it at last to the world that cares for reality beyond everything else in utter purity and splendor.[2]

[1] "Some Things Worth While in Theology," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. III, no. 4, p. 400.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 401.

IV

The theology which Dr. Gordon constructed upon the realities of the life of the spirit, buttressed by reason and grounded in history, while it has thus the substantial quality of continuity with the past necessary to save any system from the irony of individualism, bears also the marks of his own genius in abundant measure. It has individuality, persuasiveness, power. It rises, by virtue of its own outstanding superiority, to take its place among the few signal and permanent products of American theology. Let us endeavor to trace its leading ideas as far as possible genetically. Its polar principles are Incarnation and Theodicy, or, in other terms, the centrality of Christ as "the creative principle in theology" and the absolute "Moralism" or "Humanism" of God. Either truth alone would be meaningless, inexplicable, impotent.

The first to appear in the order of his thinking, or at least in the order of its presentation, is the doctrine of the Incarnation as set forth in the volume "The Christ of To-day" (1895). The title, though pertinent, is inadequate, for the Christ presented is the Christ of "yesterday,

to-day, and forever," the "Flying Goal," in one of his favorite phrases, of humanity. The intellectual strength and spiritual insight of this volume, devoted to a great and heretofore largely neglected theme, give it a place of unique importance in American theology. While it lacks the wealth and maturity and poise of its author's later work, it throbs with religious and theological passion, directed by a calm and sane rationality. The discussion opens with an arresting survey of the new world into which our age has come with the expansion of its ideas and the enrichment of its life. Then follows the query whether Christ can fulfill the need of this larger age. To meet it, the author points out "the gains manward and Godward in current thought of Christ." "We are compelled to acknowledge that the secret molding energy of our entire civilization is the mind of Christ." [1] Through Him we interpret man, God, and nature. "We baptize the creative Being behind nature and behind human history and life into the name of Christ." [2] In words that glow with the splendor of his theme, the author unfolds the half-recognized sway that the

[1] "Some Things Worth While in Theology," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. III, no. 4, p. 51. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

Christ of to-day exercises over our total world of ideals and conduct, far less complete than it should be, yet far greater than we often realize. Not content with the mere fact of Christ's potency he carries it back to its primal source and finds in God "the Eternal Prototype of humanity." "And what is this Eternal Pattern or Prototype, but the Son of Man of the synoptic gospels, the Only-begotten of the Fourth Gospel, the Mediator of the Pauline epistles, the High Priest without descent of the letter to the Hebrews, the God of God, Light of Light, begotten, not made, of the Nicene creed?" [1]

Here is the *magna charta* of the Christocentric movement in American theology, "theocentric in conclusion but Christocentric in its method of interpretation." [2] The author acknowledges his indebtedness to Fairbairn's great work "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology," yet it is clearly impetus rather than direction that he has gained from it, for the discussion moves out with superb vigor upon its own original lines and with constant reference to the home

[1] "Some Things Worth While in Theology," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. III, no. 4, p. 115.

[2] "The Collapse of the New England Theology," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. I, no. 2, p. 163.

environment created by the originative absolutism of Edwards and the critical protest of American Unitarianism. To the latter movement he offers frank and searching criticism and equally generous and discriminating appreciation. His is, indeed, a two-edged sword, dividing asunder bone and marrow.

Viewed in the light of the subsequent development of the Christocentric theology, the work is lacking in some respects, particularly in its failure to discriminate clearly between the Christ of history and the Christ of experience, a duality in unity that still awaits adequate interpretation. Nor does the author realize as clearly as can be done to-day how drastic and thoroughgoing must be the application of the spirit of Christ to modern civilization if it is to be released from its evils and defects. But in its profound sense of the impact of Christ upon the modern world and the need of a valuation of Him, metaphysical and moral, adequate to account for this effect, it is of large and permanent value and is worthy to be compared in pertinence and sagacity with Schleiermacher's epochal "Addresses to the Cultured Despisers of Religion."

V

Although the subject of the most profound of the initial utterances of Dr. Gordon is the incarnation, the reality of the Absolute, the "aboriginal" truth upon which his whole theology rests, already appears in the background. It had, in fact, disclosed itself in his first volume, "The Witness to Immortality" (1893). It comes out in full radiance in his brief but significant volume, consisting of the first Ingersoll lecture, "Immortality and the New Theodicy" (1897).

The term "theodicy" is one which he takes over from philosophy and domesticates in the soil of theology. It means, as he employs it, the Divine direction and destiny of the universe, including both nature and humanity. How does God guide the ongoing of this mighty and mysterious cosmos? And what is to be the outcome of it all? The immediate pressure of this problem upon his mind and heart was caused by the survival of the old Calvinistic-Edwardean particularistic predestinationism by which he found himself confronted. How could the truth of the Divine absoluteness be sustained and yet saved from the paralogism and

self-contradiction into which it had fallen? The solution of this problem which he reached reflects the daring, directness, and outreach of his own unfettered thought. Whether accepted or not, it constitutes a genuine and abiding contribution to the speculative theology of his time and of the future.

The defect in the New England theologians which most amazed and offended the mind of this unbiased critic was not merely the inhumanity of their theology but the utter inconsistency of their doctrine of the nature of God and the doctrine of His decrees. That a God whose perfection was the theme of their rapt contemplation and praise should be so imperfect and undivine as to sentence the greater part of mankind to perdition, appeared to him inexplicable. His critique of the Old Theology centers here. With intense earnestness he charges home upon the *unco'* orthodox, the limitations of a God content with saving a remnant, unwilling or unable to save all.[1] To confine the moral opportunity of man to this life is surely unworthy of a Perfect Being.[2] "The question is not what men deserve but

[1] *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 72.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

what God's honor demands."[1] The issue which he here lays down he resumes again and again and always with fresh force and ammunition. In a later lecture, "Faith and its Categories," he deals Augustinianism a telling blow by exposing its *illogical* nature, thus piercing it at its supposedly strongest point: "The Absolute Will is absolute in goodness; therefore the deduction that God is on the side of some men and against others is an illogical deduction. The derivation from this will of absolute goodness of two decrees, one of salvation for a certain portion of mankind, and another of reprobation for the rest of the race is a supreme instance of bad logic."[2]

It is impossible to refute this charge, put with the virility and clarity of which Dr. Gordon is master. All the forces of logic and life, of reason and sentiment, of Christianity itself, are with him. But after all, the crucial question is: What will he substitute for it? If the salvation of only a part of the race is unworthy of its Maker — what then? He does not hesitate. He accepts to the full the clear alternative. "Either this world is a moral world

[1] *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 77.
[2] *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith*, p. 126.

or it is not; if it is a moral world the Creator's redeeming interest in mankind must continue forever." [1] And this redeeming interest, the "victorious march of the divine persuasions," [2] he leaves us no room to doubt will, in his estimation, prove availing. He is satisfied with no compromise, such as the doctrine of future probation offered. "Nor are alleviations of this dismal hypothesis at all sufficient; such as the provision of a future chance for those who have had no Christian opportunity upon earth." [3] No; both in intent and accomplishment the divine redemption, he holds, is racial.

Is this "Universalism," as has been so often charged against it? Upon the basis of fair comparison, as well as in the author's own mind, it is by no means identical with denominational Universalism. "Universalism is bold to forecast an issue, to determine a result, to assert a fact; the position here maintained is that God's love and endeavor are for all his children and for them all forever." [4] It is singular how little appeal, or reference, to Paul, its proponent makes in presenting this view. I recall but one allusion to Paul's incomparable universalism,

[1] *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 88. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 77. [4] *The New Epoch for Faith*, p. 278.

and yet this Gordonian universalism comes the nearest to reflecting the spirit and outlook of the great apostle, in its scope and motive, of that of any writer on theology since Origen.

This bold, and to many irreverently hopeful, theodicy is no mere reaction from the rigid orthodoxy behind and about him; nor is it the easygoing speculation of a loose and careless liberalism. It is bound up with a conception of God which is part of the very fiber of its proponent's faith and with a belief in humanity and its destiny which cannot be detached from his conception of Christianity. It is, in other words, in his mind at least, essential to one of those "ultimates of faith" — without which Christianity would be a trifling superficialism — the goodness of God. It is linked up also with the very substance of individual and social salvation. "In order to be able to save souls," he declares, "one must believe in the possibility of saving families, societies, nations, the human race." [1] "Hopeless men," he avers, "are godless men." [2]

[1] *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith*, p. 221.

[2] *Through Man to God*, p. 1.

VI

Yet characteristic and highly colored as is this doctrine, it is only one sector of a consistent and well-rounded whole. If the conception of God upon which it rests is a doctrine of the Absolute, it is that of an Absolute whose nature is wholly and unreservedly *personal.* Few theologians, if any, have been more completely committed to the principle of Personality than Dr. Gordon. "For many years," to quote from a letter of his, "personality has been to me the key of our world and our universe. It is the key, or there is none." That true personality inheres in God as well as in man is his unshaken conviction. By it he means no mere academic, depleted wraith of personality. He is not frightened away from affirming it of God by any warning cry of "anthropomorphism." The pathway to the knowledge of God is to him that indicated by the title of his noblest volume of sermons, "Through Man to God." He is constantly exalting the "humanism of God." The closing sentences of his great sermon on "The Humanity of God" succinctly express his faith in the perfect humanism of God:

The humanity of God is given in the humanity of man; it is given supremely in the humanity of Jesus. We ascend to God through man and his sovereign leader; through man and his sovereign leader we receive God. This is our faith. Against the mild indifference of the cosmos, the inscrutable mysteries of moral wrong, pain and death, and the fearful inhumanities of man to man; in the presence of the worthy, in the presence of the Worthiest, we believe in the dear, eternal humanity of God.[1]

The meaning and content of personality, as related to God, is brought out in various lights in his volumes. There is not one in which this doctrine is not lucidly and forcefully presented. Especially rich and full is his conception of it given in the closing chapter of "Ultimate Conceptions of Faith," the volume which, in his own judgment as well as that of others, represents his best work. The meaning of God for the entire inner life of man is there summarized as follows:

For the intellect God is the final meaning of the universe. . . . For the æsthetic sense God is the significant beauty of the universe. . . . For conscience God is the final moral meaning of the universe. . . . For the will God is the doer of righteousness. . . . Finally, for man, God is the person in whom the ideal meanings of life are gathered and authenticated. . . . Our God is the Person whose life is an infinite

[1] *Through Man to God*, p. 41.

content of meanings. These meanings are in man and in man's world; and he lifts them into an Eternal Person as their logical issue and assurance.[1]

This does not mean, however, as the author goes on to point out, that man in any sense either creates or independently discovers God. On the contrary God reveals Himself to the outreaching mind. Revelation and discovery are reciprocal.

The fundamental position of faith is that God and man are implicated each in the other's life, as Jacob and the angel were implicated. They are interlocked in a tremendous midnight wrestle. Everything that God bestows man wins and everything that man wins God bestows. It is true that the angel came to the Israelite; the priority therefore belonged to him. . . . We love God because he first loved us.[2]

Can the religious mind venture fruitfully any further than this into the understanding of the Divine Personality? The answer to that query involves the doctrine of the Trinity. Dr. Gordon is an earnest trinitarian, one of the most discerning and original exponents of the doctrine in the history of American theology, which, on the whole, has been extremely dull and muddled in its perception of the meaning

[1] *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith*, pp. 333–35.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 339.

and worth of this most profound of Christian doctrines. Jonathan Edwards saw deeply into its inner meaning but the New England theologians who followed him, as a rule, held only a blank, mechanical tritheism. The New Theology with its better understanding and appreciation of the Greek theology recovered the doctrine from its abasement. A. V. G. Allen, Phillips Brooks, Egbert C. Smyth, James M. Whiton,[1] and others developed what may almost be called a new Athanasianism.

Dr. Gordon shared this historical understanding of the Trinity and added to it an interpretation of his own which is in keeping with its historical character, yet advances a fresh conception that throws genuine light upon the doctrine out of the deepening social experience of our time. This interpretation is in brief that, as man is a social being and personality a social and not merely an individual reality, there must be a Source, a Prototype of human society in the Being from whom humanity has issued. In other words, God is in Himself a "Social Being." But let him speak in his own words:

[1] Dr. Whiton's *Gloria Patri* is perhaps the best attempt to clarify the doctrine for the general reader that has been made.

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity is the full statement of the truth at which Greek mythology aimed; the discovery of the social nature of God through the social nature of man at his highest. Put into the Godhead some reality answering to the words the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and one is able to conceive of God's existence as ineffably blessed, and as containing in itself the ground of human society.[1]

The essential nature of the individual human person — possessing as he does, within himself, in the very structure of self-consciousness, the elements of tri-unity — was used as the key to the Divine nature even as early as Augustine's "De Trinitate." This suggestion that the conception be broadened to include the nature of human society itself is suggestive and contributive, if it be regarded as an auxiliary to, and not a substitute for, the analogy from individual personality. Personality itself, whether in man or God, is, by its very constitution, a self-society, an intercommunicative unity. In man personal life is limited and requires external society for its subsistence, but not necessarily in the Being from whom both the human individual and human society proceed.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 372.

VII

From his profound and suggestive conception of God we turn now to the human world, as it lies in the mind of this capacious and unfettered thinker. In contrast with the impoverished, barren, shadowed human world of the old theology, with its doctrine of human depravity and its suspicion of the innate instincts of the heart, how captivating and expansive is our human life, as the New Theology sees it! Nowhere does this hopeful and hospitable view of human life appear more richly than in the volume of Lowell lectures delivered by Dr. Gordon on the threshold of the new century, "The New Epoch for Faith" (1901). Its theme is a survey of the gains of the nineteenth century as the century of "the advent of humanity." The mood in which America entered the portals of the twentieth century, little foreseeing what was to come, was one of grateful retrospect and boundless hope. In these vivid yet serene lectures this mood of gratitude and anticipation finds unsurpassed expression. The higher gains of the later nineteenth century, in scientific and social progress, its doubts as well as its return to faith, are here appraised in

the light of religion and the greater light of Christianity. It would be difficult to find a saner, more wholesome, more idealistic view of life lived in the light of Christian faith. Whether the "things expected" with which the volume closes are as certain as the "things assumed" with which it commences, remains for the future to determine. The expectation cherished by the author is at least not one that is easily defeated: "It is expected, finally, that all contradictions of human hope will prove but mightier fulfillments of it." A prophetic and heartening word this, in view of the unforeseen devastation and chaos which have since developed, caused by the greatest self-apostasy of which this halting old world has ever been guilty. Three notably brilliant and suggestive discussions deserve attention in this volume: action and reaction in the spiritual life, the place of sentiment in religion, and the meaning of history, defined as "the study of reality through the process of its development." Each of these might well have been expanded into a volume.

In Dr. Gordon's vision of human life — its movement and its ends — very large place is occupied by the Ideal. Through our ideals God reveals Himself. In their light we see light.

"We do not discover our ideals; they discover us." [1] This intimate relation of Revelation and the Ideal is fully brought out in a volume of sermons bearing this title, published in 1913, the residuum, as he tells us in the preface, of his "audacious dream," cherished for years, of a volume on "Revelation." These sermons are simpler, less taxing and sustained than any other of his productions, but full of beauty, of wisdom, of rebuke, and of courage for the struggle against obstacles. For this keen observer of human nature and of the daily conflicts of the soul knows well how, as he puts it in an earlier volume, "the dust of the actual is blown in the clean and shining face of the ideal" [2] and with what foes the soul has to contend if it is not disobedient to the heavenly vision. With gracious sympathy and unfailing hopefulness he girds the warrior for his task and points him to the shining heights of victory beyond.

VIII

We have seen something of Dr. Gordon's conception of Christ, of God and of man. Let us ask, finally, concerning his conception of

[1] *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 120.

[2] *Through Man to God*, p. 109.

nature. Nature is to his mind, as to many another, the great enigma. He is exceedingly sensitive to her beauties and especially to her grandeurs. Sublime nature scenes fill his mind with a joy and an awe that communicate themselves with the greatest vividness. Mountains loom vast and alluring before his imagination, sunsets paint his memory with undying glories, rivers flow serene and majestic through the fields of his thought. He is an ardent nature lover. He finds God in her. And yet he finds nature far inferior to man as a revelation. He is conscious, too, of the reverse aspect of nature, her wildness, her independence, her power to thwart and stifle the life of the spirit. He is sure that she issues from the same divine Fountainhead as man, yet — *how?*

His study of philosophy has made clear to him the fact that the mind impresses its own forms upon nature. "Without man," he exclaims, "what a strange ghost nature becomes." [1] Yet he assigns to nature a certain independent realm and reality of her own. Nevertheless he is unwilling to allow that there is any radical cleavage between the world of nature and the human world. To him the dis-

[1] *Through Man to God*, p. 90.

tinction between natural and revealed religion is an "unholy distinction." [1]

Nature's values for the spirit life, when rightly seen and used — her ordered, dependable uniformity, the majestic movement of her laws, the silent witness of her beauty — are so rich and satisfying to the thoughtful soul, meditating on her laws day and night, that many a mind finds it difficult to discover any place for miracle. So incongruous and burdensome did the weight of miracles come to seem to Dr. Gordon that it at length aroused him to open and deliberate revolt. The occasion was the invitation to deliver the Nathanael W. Taylor lectures at Yale University in 1909. For this he selected as his theme "Religion and Miracle." His purpose, which was not to destroy miracle but to show its relative unimportance, was carried out with admirable cogency and in a catholic and convincing spirit. His thesis is that miracle is non-essential because unverifiable in experience, "and it is clear that the unverifiable can never remain an essential part of a reasonable faith." [2] The discussion is free from dogmatism or assertiveness. Belief in the Virgin

[1] *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. I, no. 2, p. 145.

[2] *Religion and Miracle*, p. 38.

Birth is treated with respect but it is declared to be "immaterial how Jesus began or how he came into the world." [1] "For myself," the lecturer affirms, "I forget to raise the question, even in thought, how this child began to be; with the wise men I can only open my heart in homage and gifts." [2] Concerning the resurrection he states: "The essential thing here is the assurance of a risen Lord; we are not supremely concerned about the manner of the resurrection; what we desire is assurance of the fact." [3] And of the fact he finds ample assurance.

The whole presentation is an illuminating study in spiritual emphasis and as such has permanent value; but as compared with his other theological enterprises, one cannot help raising the question whether the game was worth the candle — Dr. Gordon's candle. The appearance of the volume brought a considerable storm of protest and attack during which the storm-center wrote to a friend: "I am getting a terrible pounding from all over the country . . . and some from good men whom I deeply respect and truly love. Since it is said that 'the way of the transgressor is hard' and

[1] *Religion and Miracle*, p. 96.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 105. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 107.

that 'the way of the prophet is hard' I am not quite sure which way I am on. I think, however, that I am following the *Gleam*."

IX

The portrait of George A. Gordon as primarily a theologian, here presented, will undoubtedly occasion surprise, if not dissent, on the part of not a few who have regarded him as a preacher rather than a theologian. This dissociation of the theologian and preacher is typical of a very general misconception of the inner kinship of these allied offices. Theology is supposed by many intelligent people to be quite alien, both in matter and spirit, to the pulpit and the less the latter has to do with it, in their judgment, the better. It must be confessed that there is some ground for this notion. Theology has been too often dragged into the pulpit in skeleton form and the rattle of its bones has either depressed the pews or emptied them. But there is theology and theology; and when the right kind of theology, clothed in flesh and blood and vitalized by a living faith, is presented in the pulpit it wins not only a hearing, but a heeding. The pulpit of the Old South Church has given a great congregation theology — pure

and wholesome — from the lips of this great preacher for thirty-five years and they have fed upon it as upon the finest of the wheat; and no marvel. It has been, not technical or classroom theology, but pulpit theology.

Dr. Gordon's sermons differ from his technical lectures and papers in form and manner and clothing. They are simpler, warmer, closer to every-day life. Yet for substance of doctrine they are the same. For example, the conception of Christ which in "The Christ of To-day" is set forth panoplied in philosophical, cosmical, and doctrinal terms reappears in his sermon "The Moral Ideal in Christ," thus: "Our glorious Master, Christ, is our end; our aim is to be found, whether present or absent, well pleasing to Him! We aim at becoming like Him, so exalted in intellect, so purified in heart, made so great, true, and tender in spirit, that when we come into the presence of His soul we shall be found agreeable to His will. That is Christianity." [1] So with other of the great theological doctrines, which will be found throughout his sermons,— not as mere passing thoughts but as seasoned, tested, abiding convictions, offered as nourishment for life

[1] *Revelation and the Ideal*, p. 277.

and conduct. This preaching is not open to the criticism of consisting merely of gleams of inspiration and ideal, playing mockingly upon the hard surface of actual life. It is full of pity and sympathy. Nor is it wanting in sternness when occasion demands. It flames at times into prophetic and scorching rebuke. At the close of a severe arraignment of the lotus-eating, pleasure-loving, self-indulgent life led to-day by many in our churches the preacher exclaimed: "Is this too plain? My answer is that there is no earthly use in preaching if we cannot speak the truth to one another in love." [1] Despite the wealth and charm of his sermons, with their appeal to the feelings and the imagination, the bulk of their message is to the intellect. No preacher ever honored the intelligence of his congregation more highly than the pastor of the Old South Church and no congregation ever responded to the confidence more splendidly. The result has been an abiding witness to the place and power of doctrinal preaching that has done much to keep the standard of the American pulpit from declining.

[1] *Revelation and the Ideal*, p. 276.

X

It is not often that a volume crowns an author's work with such consummate grace and spiritual fruitage as "Aspects of the Infinite Mystery" (1916) crowns that of Dr. Gordon. It is to be hoped that he will give us much hereafter, but, however rare and enriching, it will be largely in the nature of aftermath. That he himself regards this volume as sustaining a peculiar relationship to his total work is evident from the "Personal Word" with which it opens. "While I am not aware of any contradiction between the views advanced here and the views presented in earlier books of mine," he writes, "I am conscious of new feelings and a new mood of the spirit toward the Eternal Wonder that is the object of all faith." This new mood is as evident to the reader as to the author. It is a book of experience, ripe and rewarding in an extraordinary degree. One of the main evidences of its sincerity and maturity is the great sense of mystery which envelops it, so suggestively embodied in its remarkable — one may say its moving and majestic — title, "Aspects of the Infinite Mystery," a title made more signifi-

cant by the author's confidence with the reader as to his choice of it. The title bears in itself, as a quiet lake at evening, the reflected mind of the author. It mirrors at once both the sunset clouds of his mysticism and the steadfast stars of his rationalism. "Mystery," infinite Mystery, yes, but not blank mystery; mystery that has "aspects," values, meanings, meanings brought out with a deft, experienced touch which leaves the reader even more deeply impressed with the meanings than with the mystery. In this harvest sheaf are garnered all the cardinal doctrines of the author of "The Christ of To-day" and "Ultimate Conceptions of Faith"; yet each has entered a riper stage and is bathed in a warmer atmosphere. The universe, as it has unfolded itself to him through years of experience, is less clearly defined but more meaningful, "its excellence so great that our thoughts are but shadows upon the hillsides of the Eternal reality." [1]

XI

The reality of the Eternal recurs as the supreme truth — the vast, absorbing, absolute, underlying Reality, God,— here conceived as

[1] *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, p. 15.

"Absolute Worth," the Worth which can inhere only in the Absolute Person. The reality of this Absolute Person is assured by the same "instinctive reason" that assures men of the reality of themselves, of nature, and of other persons. This appeal to "instinctive reason" as the basis of reality is a reappearance in another form of the same truth criterion which the author has applied throughout his discussions of religious truth, as it is admirably presented, e.g., in the opening chapter of "The New Epoch for Faith": "The ultimate premise of thought is not proof. It is insight or assumption in accordance with sane reason."

Thus, we find the author's maturer reflection reaffirming the principle with which he began his ministry: *experience the source and validation of spiritual truth.* The assurance with which this conviction deepened in his mind, as he watched the movement of religious thought, is reflected in a letter, written in 1913, in which he says: "My feeling about philosophy and theology is this: Both must become the intellectual form of a profound religious conviction, otherwise they are not nearly so useful as a heap of sawdust. My criticism upon all departments of the general discipline known

under the name of theology is that it is not profound enough in its religious experience."

It is reassuring to find that in this late and mature meditation upon the ways of God with men, Dr. Gordon, though no longer buoyed up by the surging tides that give strength to the speculative instinct in the earlier years of reflection, nevertheless holds fast to his great and daring assurance as to the Divine responsibility to man, sure to issue in the final redemption of the race; and that with a still deeper faith and more filial confidence. Hitherto he has attached the doctrine chiefly to God as Creator of men and Master of their destinies; now he attaches it still more directly to the simple and unavoidable responsibility entailed by Fatherhood.

> A parent is the responsible author of the life of another and therefore under the most sacred obligation to care for that life. We apply this to God. . . . I confess that I stand nowhere more at peace than I do on this ground. When I implicate the honor of God and involve his whole character with the tragedy of time, I am sure that I am rendering him the homage of the absolute truth; I thus declare my belief that he will stand by his infinite obligation to his rational creatures in this world. If that is not homage I do not know the meaning of the word.[1]

[1] *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, p. 94.

In all the vast literature of Christian theology since Paul, the thinker has yet to be found who has had the insight and the faith — should we not say the courage? — to rest the conviction of universal redemption so simply, completely, and yet with so rational a basis, upon the Fatherhood of God. The tremendous obstacles in the way of this faith do not escape him; but they are such as attach to the belief in Divine Fatherhood itself. "This is our faith," he declares, "we cannot prove it true beyond doubt or question." "Every thinker," as he says elsewhere, "takes his life in his hand, the denier no less than the affirmer." [1] The only adequate test is experience.

> A theory of swimming can never be satisfactory even when it is clearly the best among theories, till one takes it into the water. . . . It is so with faith. The theory of the Fatherhood in God must be taken into the deep waters; it must be tested when all God's waves and billows are gone over us.[2]

XII

The appeal to faith, ratified in experience, is conclusive for this deeply religious yet rational mind, but it indicates, nevertheless, no failure

[1] *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 24.

[2] *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, p. 108.

to recognize the necessary and wholesome function of *criticism* in the field of theology. Yet he demands of criticism that it be genuine. In dealing with the second great problem in reality which he here confronts, the reality of Jesus, he institutes a most searching critique of modern Biblical and historical criticism. The task of criticism, as he sees it, is twofold, "to let nothing unreal pass as real, to allow nothing real to pass as unreal," perhaps the most penetrating and succinct definition of criticism ever given.[1] The first part of this task he concedes has been well fulfilled by the modern New Testament critic, but in the second half of his task he has failed. What is needed to-day, in the judgment of Dr. Gordon, is a *criticism of criticism*. The kind of criticism that dims the personality of Jesus to shadow and myth, or that "reduces criticism of great documents to the play of a puppy with a rag" should be called to account, he asserts, with a severe challenge of its sanity. His word to the critic is this:

> Son of man, stand upon thy feet; let us have your mind upon the phenomena in question. Separate your sure judgments, supported by evidence, from your guesses; deliver us from the greatest of all

[1] *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, p. 137.

humbugs — the spirit of the age — into the spirit of good sense, careful and weighty opinion, and if possible into the love of attainable truth.[1]

Here is the word our generation has been waiting for, convinced of the need and value of criticism but dimly conscious that something has been the trouble with modern historical and Biblical criticism and not knowing exactly what it is. Dr. Gordon has put his finger, kindly but firmly, on the weak spot. He, above all others, is the man to have done this, familiar as he has always been with Biblical scholarship, untrammeled, progressive and fearless in his whole mental attitude, yet keenly sensitive to literary as well as spiritual values. Upon the strength of what he regards as genuine historical *criteria*, he goes on to vindicate the historical reality of Jesus, claiming for it such evidence as "the impact and power of his life upon the life of his people and his time," "the image of his career in literature," and the "survival of his ideas," of church and kingdom. In close, patient, sympathetic study of the Gospels one comes to meet Jesus face to face. But that is not the only place one meets him. His face blends wondrously with the moral ideal that

[1] *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, pp. 144, 145.

forever haunts the human heart. To follow Christ and to follow "the Gleam" are, he conceives, one.

Yet there are foes and pitfalls in the pursuit of the Christ ideal. The fascinating appeal of the moral ideal and the inner desire for it, as the author depicts them in the chapter "Man and the Moral Ideal," and the great inspirations that come to the soul from nature and the world of human beings and the presence of the Infinite and Eternal, as he presents them in the moving chapter "The Reality of Inspiration," are constant; they are our unfailing resources. Yet we have immense obstacles to meet and overcome in the very constitution of the body itself, as related to the mind. These are honestly faced in the chapter "The Dualism in Man." Our nature is dual. We are caught and held and buffeted by the diverse, often conflicting demands of our own nature. To adjust the physical and the spiritual, ideal and environment, is a serious, sometimes a tragic task.

Moreover, we are in a world whose life is steeped in evil and whose moral inertia and stagnation drag us back. The brutality of man asserts itself, as in the Great War, with sinister and awful denial of the good. We are dazed and

momentarily overwhelmed by such facts as are fully recognized in the chapter "Moral Evil and Racial Hope." In view of these terrible strains of faith, the movement of this symphonic portrayal of the inner life which began in the *allegro* of joyous confidence, passes into agitation and sorrow. The minor chords of disturbance and doubt emerge; but not for long. The victorious optimism of the author reasserts itself. The dualism with which we are perplexed and retarded, may be, will be, he asserts, resolved in a final unity. The very massing and advance of evil will defeat itself. For it is of the very nature of evil to be self-destructive. Thus the discord that creeps into this symphony of life is overcome and the music moves on in deepening peace and harmony to the end. The sense of mystery in which the whole is bathed does not disappear at the close; but it becomes more and more mystery in the New Testament sense "as the publication of hidden wisdom, as the clear disclosure of the hitherto concealed purpose of the Eternal." [1]

The closing chapters set forth "the mystery of redemption" — the passion to transform the "mere capacity" of another soul into a "shining

[1] *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, p. 305.

actuality" — an impulse which leads to the assurance that "the Being who gives to one soul the passion to redeem another soul must himself be that redeeming passion in its infinite strength." "The Mystery of the End" with which the volume concludes, resuming as it does the theme of the author's first volume, "The Witness to Immortality," suggests again the symphonic nature of his work as a whole. In that early volume he assembled in an impressive manner the witnesses to immortality from literature and philosophy and Christianity, closing with the witness from "trust." In this later volume he sums up the grounds of faith in immortality in this unique and striking fashion: "The sea bird has three ways of maintaining life; it swims, it walks, it flies. The soul, the believing soul, has three ways of maintaining its faith in the reality of life after death; it feels, it reasons, it rises into the heights of Christian experience and insight." [1]

XIII

Surveying Dr. Gordon's thought as a whole, in the light of the foregoing review of it, how may we summarize and appraise his service to

[1] *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, p. 322.

the science of theology? It is impossible to pour so rich and copious a vintage into scant vessels, but for the sake of those who know his work but slightly, let us venture the attempt.

He has, in the first place, fulfilled the task commenced by Bushnell, of restoring to American theology the spirit of comprehensiveness and unity. The New England theology, as has been already pointed out, had fallen into pettiness and bondage to system. It required nineteenth-century doubt to arouse the church to the need of a wider and deeper faith. "It seems as if there were but one sure way," Dr. Gordon remarks, "to recall the Christian church from intellectual pettiness. It appears as if that one way were to throw into doubt the eternal verities." [1] Some large and constructive body of coördinated truth was needed to take the place of the barren systemism of the old theology and to turn back the tides of increasing skepticism. Bushnell outlined such a theology; Gordon completed it. His theology, as we have seen, is held together by no formal logical system; yet it is unified by an invisible principle of cohesion. It has perspective, harmony, wholeness. In a word, it is comprehensive. Here

[1] *Ultimate Conceptions of Faith*, p. 302.

is a mind that will neither imprison truth in formulas nor let it lie in disordered fragments. His vision of Christianity is exceedingly broad and inclusive. No essential doctrine is wanting in his large and inwardly unified theology — unless it be that of atonement, which is present indeed, but hardly in its due and ample place. The significant thing is that these doctrines all lie in such natural and vital kinship to one another. Without effort or compulsion he has woven a seamless robe whose pattern is as perfect as its texture.

Characteristic of Dr. Gordon's mind is its love of unity. Indeed, if criticism is to be made of his theology — and what theology is not open to criticism? — it may well be here. The robe of unity is so ample as to cover many protruding contradictions in the present order. For these he makes too little place. The Platonic cast of his mind dominates the Aristotelian. He is the Origen of our age. The "large discourse of reason, looking before and after" leads him to ignore dissonant facts. The significance of freedom is too often lost in the larger unity. The Augustinianism which he thrusts aside with one hand he comes very near welcoming back with the other. Nor is this done

wholly unconsciously. In his Ingersoll lecture he frankly accepts and defends determinism, declaring, "The question at issue, so far as it concerns theology, is not between determinism and indeterminism, but between the moral and the immoral forms of that sovereign conception." [1] This is too close a merging of divine purpose and divine decree to win the full consent of present-day thought. The modern mind calls for the total dispersion of every cloud that obscures the full fact of human freedom. That which Dr. Gordon calls "the victorious march of the divine persuasions in behalf of the highest good of mankind" [2] is in full accord with the largest recognition of the free human will; but when "persuasion" passes into "determinism" its character is lost. When the persuading power of the Divine reason and love is resolved into the compelling power of Will we are back again under the old bondage. Clearly this is not his intent; yet he fails to clear himself from the danger of misunderstanding at this point.

A fuller recognition of the reality of freedom, even though it caused a jar in the movement of his thought, or left the temple of truth less

[1] *Immortality and the New Theodicy*, p. 98.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 100.

complete — not less of Plato but more of William James — would have given to this superb structure of thought a firmer attachment to solid earth with its obstinate pluralisms and disunities. It would have made the fearful rebellions in the human world, perhaps also in nature herself, less incomprehensible. Whether this would involve greater restraint in the doctrine of universal redemption — leaving less to God and more to man, less therefore to assurance and more to hope — is matter for difference of judgment.

One aspect of freedom only receives full recognition in Dr. Gordon's theology; "Freedom is insight into the true order of existence, susceptibility to that insight, obedience to it, and harmonious existence under it." [1] This is, virtually, Edwards' conception of freedom, good as far as it goes, but insufficient. Freedom is more than insight and obedience; it is power of initiation, of genuine creative activity, exercised, it is true, under the "great Taskmaster's eye" and through power imparted by Him, but nevertheless coöperative in the great process of cosmic construction. It is this very potentiality in freedom which makes the

[1] Article cited: *Harvard Theological Review*, p. 139.

possibility of its abuse at once so unavoidable and so full of potential disaster. This kind of freedom is implicit in all of Dr. Gordon's attitudes toward human life, yet it fails of full recognition in his theology, doubtless because of its emphasis upon the Godward rather than the manward side of truth. If, however, we cannot have in the same mind — as the history of human thought seems to indicate that we cannot — an equal recognition of unity and plurality, God and freedom; let us not fail to recognize that it is to the minds that have grasped most firmly the principle of *unity* that we are most indebted.

XIV

A second characteristic of Dr. Gordon's theology is originality. It is a venturesome claim to make for a contribution to so ancient and affluent a science that it is original. Yet it may be made without hesitation for this. With all its close continuity with the past, its loyalty to the historic doctrines of the faith, it yet conceives them, and Christianity itself, in a fresh, strong, and unique manner. His thought has in its very texture and quality the unmistakable "feel" of originality. To use his own

words in defining originality, "It advances upon its subject in a great invasion, illuminates reality like the sun, and while it is itself hard to look at, makes the world that lives in its light visible and beautiful." [1] Let us test the quality of this work in the light of its author's own chosen *criteria* of originality. These are three: "Originality means first of all the new; either absolutely or relatively; in the second place, it signifies greater depth in the apprehension of the old and the putting of the old thus apprehended in new relations; finally, it stands for immediate contact with reality." Unconsciously and therefore the more conclusively, these words define the characteristics which stamp the work of their writer. It is new, relatively at least; it has depth in apprehending and freshness in restating the old; and it gives clear evidence of immediate contact with reality.

XV

The third and most outstanding characteristic of Dr. Gordon's theology is its *ennobling* quality. It restores beauty, imagination, feeling, to theology. How largely these had been lost

[1] "Things Worth While in Theology," *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. III, no. 4, p. 382.

to "the queen of the sciences" especially in America, one has but to look into one of the typical treatises of the New England school to discover. Edwards, despite the rigorism of his Calvinism, had a certain chaste and mystic love of beauty which steals through his somber pages like the perfume of blossoms in the desert. Hopkins, with all his heavy movement, is not oblivious to the inner light which cannot shine save in beauty. N. W. Taylor's "Moral Government of God" is suffused by a certain grandeur of inborn eloquence; but for the most part American theology shunned the beautiful and ignored every impulse of feeling and imagination, as Bunyan's "Pilgrim" turned away from the wares of Vanity Fair.

The author of "The Christ of To-day," "The New Epoch for Faith," and all these other glowing volumes has rededicated imagination to the service of theology, claimed for sentiment a place near the throne of intellect and made all his productions conform to the lofty and holy behests of literary art. It is a high achievement and worthy of note. Bushnell and Beecher uttered their prophetic messages with a native force and freedom such as often rose to the highest eloquence; but neither was

a student of literary art. Munger showed how a sermon can be made a piece of pure and appropriate literature, but his literary output was not large. It remained for Gordon to produce a sustained series of volumes which cannot fail to take high rank in American literature; and this without ceasing to be distinctively theological, but rather gaining thereby, both as literature and as theology. His sermons are, as Professor George H. Palmer has called them, "great lyrics." [1] The theological treatises fall little short of being great epics. Consonant with their lofty themes, they move with an almost Miltonic music and stateliness. Burdened as is the thought at times with an intense and often necessarily intricate interplay, that frees itself from its barriers in swift and leaping ardor — producing what Bliss Perry has termed the "athletic quality of his style" [2] — when these are overcome it sweeps like a great river from a tumultuous cañon into a fruitful plain and flows with the movement of a stately poem to the sea of its large and beneficent ends.[3] It is

[1] *Twenty-fifth Anniversary Volume*, p. 121.

[2] "His own [i.e., Dr. Gordon's] style, so clean-cut, so athletic, so rich with humor and pathos, has been formed by reverent intimacy with the masters of thought and verse." *Ibid.*, p. 115.

[3] See e.g., *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, p. 311.

no every-day task to keep thought at the level of these high themes without straining the bounds of expression. The tides of his thought — to change the figure — often dash impulsively against the rocky headlands of reason and sanity but never break through; they sweep far up upon the fair fields of sentiment and affection but never inundate them. The discipline of true ethic and true art has taught him when to say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Abundance is here but no extravagance, luxuriance but no exaggeration. The tenderness of his favorite poet, Burns, invests his pages, but restrained by the ethical rigor of a mind that never parts company with Puritan sobriety.

Not only is literary art inwrought into all his own noble craftsmanship, literature constantly lends its treasures to enrich and further his thought. He continues that fruitful alliance of literature and theology which Dr. Munger initiated. There is constant and abundant evidence, upon almost every page, of familiarity not only with historical theology and philosophy but also with the best literature, especially the great poetry of the ages. Through his Lenten lectures he has become a spiritual

interpreter of the great Christian poets in a way which the academic teacher of literature can hardly hope to equal.[1]

Yet his literary art is always subordinate to his great purposes, rational, ethical, and religious. It is an instrument of his strong and unflagging optimism,— an optimism which shines out resplendent in the first chapter of his first publication,[2] pervades his whole work, and glows richly in the afternoon light of "Aspects of the Infinite Mystery." His is no weak and near-sighted optimism, but one that has looked into the darkest aspects of the Infinite Mystery and is not dismayed. It is much more than a "cheerful optimism"; it is reverent, rational, sustaining.

It is for these reasons that I have chosen the word ennobling as peculiarly expressive of the thought of this truly Christian theologian. He touches no theme, no doctrine, no aspect of life, that he does not ennoble. There is the same true elevation of mind in a page of his as in a page of Martineau, or Carlyle, or of Milton himself.

[1] For example, instances of his work as a literary critic are to be found in articles in *The Atlantic Monthly*, upon two of his favorite authors, Milton and Shakespeare.

[2] For example, "Life in our time is founded upon optimism," etc.; *The Witness to Immortality*, p. 6.

Everything is lifted up and set in the light of the Eternal. It is in this transcendent realm that all experience takes its due place in his thought and purpose — all truth and beauty, all pain and evil, all aspiration and endeavor, life itself. Eternity is set in the heart of his thinking.

"We are all in the presence of the Infinite Mystery of Godliness; our increasing sense of this Reality means the increasing life of humanity; yet this life must ever be in the awe of the uncomprehended Fulness of truth and love." [1]

[1] *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*, p. 22.

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM J. TUCKER

WILLIAM JEWETT TUCKER

1839.	Born in Griswold, Conn., July 13.
1840.	Parents removed to Norwich, Conn.
1847.	Death of his mother, Sarah White Lester.
1847.	Went to live with Rev. William R. Jewett, an uncle, in Plymouth, N.H.
1857.	Entered Dartmouth College.
1861.	Graduated from Dartmouth College.
1862–63.	Taught in High School, Columbus, Ohio.
1863.	Entered Andover Theological Seminary.
1864.	Served in the United States Christian Commission.
1866.	Graduated from Andover Seminary.
1866.	Made a survey of religious conditions in southwestern Missouri and southeastern Kansas.
1867.	Ordained to the ministry as pastor of Franklin Street Church, Manchester, N.H., January 24.
1870.	Married Charlotte H. Rogers of Plymouth, N.H.
1875.	Installed as pastor of the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, New York, May 12.
1875.	Degree of Doctor of Divinity conferred by Dartmouth College; University of Vermont, 1904.
1878–1909.	Trustee of Dartmouth College.
1879.	Accepted a call to the chair of Homiletics in Andover Theological Seminary.
1880.	Installed as Bartlet Professor of Sacred Rhetoric and Lecturer in Pastoral Theology in Andover Theological Seminary.
1882.	Mrs. Tucker died.
1884–93.	Joint founder and editor of *The Andover Review*.
1886–92.	One of the five defendants in the Andover Heresy Trial.
1887.	Married Charlotte, daughter of Rev. Henry T. Cheever of Worcester, Mass.
1891.	Established Andover (now South End) House, Boston.
1891.	Lecturer on Homiletics, Harvard Divinity School.
1892.	Phi Beta Kappa orator, Harvard University.
1893.	Accepted a call to presidency of Dartmouth College, reconsidering declination of the previous year.
1894.	Lowell Institute lecturer.
1895–97.	Andover Theological Seminary lecturer on Stone Foundation.
1898.	Lyman Beecher lecturer, Yale University.
1902.	Morse Foundation lecturer, Union Seminary.
1906.	Earl lecturer, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, Cal.
1907.	Offered resignation of presidency of Dartmouth.
1909.	Resignation accepted.
1911.	Made President Emeritus.

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM J. TUCKER

THE NEW THEOLOGY IN ACTION

Much of the interest and carrying power of the New Theology movement lay in its *personnel*, which was strikingly varied, forceful, attractive. Its representatives have possessed in an unusual degree individuality, force, influence.

In no instance has the personal equation counted for more than in that of President Tucker. Something in William Jewett Tucker recalls the sentence with which Emerson opens his essay on Character: "I have read that those who listened to Lord Chatham felt that there was something finer in the man than anything which he said." Dr. Tucker has said exceedingly fine things and said them exceedingly finely. Indeed, that is one of his most characteristic habits. Yet there is something in the man still finer. It is indefinable, or it would not be of so great consequence. "Personality" is the word to which we retreat when

we can get no further with our halting analyses and descriptions. It must serve here.

Whatever it may be, this quality pervades his thinking, giving it "the purple" of which Stevenson speaks; his speech, clothing it in the fine raiment of an ordered mind; all his contacts and activities. He belongs, indeed, to the American nobility, the nobility of true democracy, holding its title from no hand of royalty but that of self-conquest, guaranteed by no heritage save that of unstained native blood. The one thing that this man never has been, nor can be, is — commonplace. High-mindedness invests him. His whole purpose and influence have been to lift life, in all of its activities, out of the mean and commonplace into nobility and worth. He will not have men, or deeds, drop into the slough of sordidness. "The great danger which besets us in our estimation of human nature is that of indifference or contempt," he once said, and against that danger he has ever been on guard and ever putting others on guard.

I

Dr. Tucker is a true New Englander, his grandfather, "Squire Tucker," being the fifth

in descent from Robert Tucker who came to Weymouth, Mass., from England in 1635. His boyhood embraced the double fascination of the Connecticut coast, where he spent his early years in the old town of Norwich, and of the White Mountains, whither he went at the age of nine to live with his uncle, the Rev. William R. Jewett, in the town of Plymouth, N.H. Dartmouth College naturally became his *Alma Mater* and well did she minister to him in *litterisque humanis rebus*. At the time of his graduation his purpose was to enter the legal profession, for which he had both aptitude and talent; but serious reflection upon the largest opportunity for personal service led him to turn toward the ministry and to the doors of venerable Andover Seminary. Here he found intellectual stimulus and spiritual culture in the classrooms of Park and Phelps and Stowe. But the touch which awoke him to the deeper realities of Christian faith came from that dauntless victor over doubt and dismay, who being dead yet spake to the young men of his day and of ours — Frederick Robertson. Reflecting upon the influence of Robertson upon him, Dr. Tucker has written: "His fundamental conception of Christianity as revealing what is

otherwise obscure, uncertain, perhaps deniable, namely the fact of human sonship, every man by nature a son of God, has been the conception which has most influenced me in my work in the pulpit and among men. It has given me a steady working faith in human nature. I have not been afraid of what may have seemed to others to be an over estimation of men."

The first pastorate of Mr. Tucker was that of the Franklin Street Church of Manchester, N.H., where his spiritual initiative, preaching power, and high devotion to his task made his ministry a notable one, and where he established a bond of union with the State of New Hampshire which was later to be renewed with still larger results. After a pastorate of seven years in Manchester he accepted a call to the Madison Square Presbyterian Church, New York, where he met a difficult task with courage and ability.

Fourteen years after his graduation he was recalled to Andover Seminary as professor of Homiletics (Sacred Rhetoric) and Pastoral Theology. Here he speedily became a potent factor in the conduct and development of the institution, in the guidance of the students, and in the religious and educational life of New

England. As teacher he was intensely alert, attractive, suggestive; as preacher he was vibrant, high-minded, challenging; as a molder of thought he was reverent, intrepid, progressive. He went through the Andover controversy with unflagging faith in the cause and emerged from it unscathed, a recognized leader in the progressive movement in the Pilgrim churches and beyond. Among the members of the Andover faculty he, more than any other, interpreted the real Andover movement to the churches. In a notable sermon before the General Assembly of Congregational churches of Massachusetts, June 25, 1882, he did much to correct the current misunderstandings of Andover theology and to bring the real seriousness and significance of the movement home to the understanding of the constituency of the Seminary.

There was no man whose vision seemed to his students to penetrate so discerningly into the modern movement of life and thought in its relation to Christianity and the church as that of Professor Tucker. In his classroom, his sermons, his public addresses, his writings, he was without an equal in seizing upon the aspects of modern life which call for readjustment in the thought and activity of the church, and

which open into large opportunity. In this dual service to the seminary and the church he continued for fourteen years until at length the educational world laid a constraining hand upon him and he became president of Dartmouth College, in which office he remained until his retirement as president *emeritus* in 1911. This larger responsibility, however, by no means severed his interest from either church administration or theology.

II

Perhaps the chief service which Dr. Tucker has done for those who have come within his influence has been to give them courage. It would not be true to characterize the period in which he has lived and worked as one of unfaith. But it has had its deep unrest, its mood of world-weariness, its perplexity and exhaustion in face of problems more numerous, if not more urgent, than any previous period has had to meet. In the midst of these, and sensitive to them, he has shown an indomitable courage, having in it a certain exhilarating quality, like that wine of the spirit wherein is no excess. In the midst of a perplexed and hard-pressed if not a crooked and perverse generation he has stood

as a Puritan of the new age, serious but not somber, reliant but not combative, challenging his fellows to face the difficulties and redeem the opportunities of the present era in the spirit in which the fathers met their tasks. "I put you on your guard," are his ringing words, "against the superficial and faithless interpretation of your own times." [1]

It is this communicative courage, this militant faith, which drew young men to him and made him steadily and increasingly their leader and friend. He appealed to their daring, their love of high adventure. The words of Samuel J. Mills were often on his lips, "We can if we will." This power to attract young men doubtless made itself felt in his pastorates but it first showed itself in full force at Andover. The seminary students felt it keenly. There was about him a certain vibrancy, a spiritual athleticism, not so much a halo or an aura as an electric magnetism, which drew them to him and clothed him with a certain fascination of authoritative leadership.

This identification of himself with the young man's cause and viewpoint came out with peculiar intensity in the heat of the Andover-

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. XVI, no. 90, p. 461.

American Board controversy. In this crisis he became in a special manner the defender and spokesman of the students who were rejected by the Board as unfit candidates for missionary service because they would not subscribe to "the dogma of a restricted opportunity." All that was chivalrous and liberty-loving within him sprang into action at this attack upon the freedom and hospitality of Christian faith. The sermon entitled "The Open Door which None can Shut," which he preached in Andover Chapel, October 16, 1887, after the meeting of the American Board at Springfield (published the following day in the "Boston Daily Advertiser" and later in "The Andover Review") was full of the fire of indignation, tempered by a fine control. It was no partisan championship of a suppressed cause, but a searching appeal to meet the emergency with magnanimity and candor, — as appears in such words as these:

> Do not temporize. Do not prevaricate. Do not magnify or belittle any truth of which you are put in trust. Let no man compel you to say more than you believe; let no man compel you to say less than you believe. Let your yea be yea and your nay, nay; for in times of distress and excitement and contention, what is more than these cometh of evil.[1]

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. VIII, no. 47, p. 510.

The ties by which Professor Tucker bound young men to him at Andover, the ambitions which he kindled, the uplift of his presence, the radiance of his ideals, the power of his influence, left a deep impression upon his students. Whenever his erect form entered chapel or classroom it brought a stir of reinvigoration. When a student went across the ancient, elm-embowered campus to his home to talk with him about his plans for the future, he invariably came away with a certain glow of elation as if new and unsuspected resources of power and usefulness had been discovered to himself. If this lover of young men overestimated some of his students, he at least succeeded in calling them to higher and more potent visions of what they could do for humanity and the determination to carry them into realization.

III

The courage which President Tucker has infused into his generation — the high purpose and resolution — is the more effectual because accompanied by another quality which we have already anticipated, — Christian statesmanship. He has been one of the spiritual statesmen of his time. By spiritual statesmanship I

mean something akin to prophecy yet more definite and effective, discernment of the leading issues that confront men of the kingdom and of the way in which they are to be met. While other men have been more conspicuous in ecclesiastical and educational leadership and in popular following, few have equaled him in clear and far-sighted sagacity. His gift of statesmanship, developed by constant exercise, has shown itself, not in one direction only, but in many. Upon whatever front he has served — and he has served on not a few — he has had the faculty to detect the strategic points of attack and defense.

In his association with the theological renascence, which most concerns us here, while he was in no sense a technical theologian, he perceived with rare insight and wisdom the vital principles of the new movement and the doctrines which had in them the promise and potency of the future.

At the center of the movement he saw, as did others about him who were most sensitive to the new conception of Christianity, the rediscovered consciousness of Christ. "The revelation of God in Christ is rectifying all other and minor beliefs and bringing them into

harmony with this which is central and supreme." This revaluation of Christ he construed as "the interpretation of a person, not the solution of a problem." Yet he did not hesitate before its metaphysical implications: "The revealer of God the Father is naturally God the Son. The revelation must hold the quality and substance of the life revealed."

Without doubt the trend of modern thought and faith is toward the more perfect identification of Christ with humanity. We cannot overestimate the advantage to Christianity of this tendency. The world must know and feel the humanity of Jesus. But it makes the greatest difference in result whether the ground of the common humanity is in him or in us. To borrow the expressive language of Paul, was he "created" in us? Or are we "created" in him? Grant the right of the affirmation that "there is no difference in kind between the divine and the human"; allow the interchange of terms so that one may speak of the humanity of God and the divinity of man; appropriate the motive which lies in these attempts to bring God and man together and thus to explain the personality of Jesus Christ, it is still a matter of infinite concern whether his home is in the higher or the lower regions of divinity. After all, very little is gained by the transfer of terms. Humanity is in no way satisfied with its degree of divinity. We are still as anxious as ever to rise above ourselves and in this anxiety we want to know concerning our great helper whether He has in himself anything more than the possible increase

of a common humanity. What is his power to lift and how long may it last? Shall we ever reach his level, become as divine as He, or does he have part in the absolute and infinite? This question may seem remote in result but it is everything in principle. The immanence of Christ has its present meaning and value because of his transcendence.

These passages, taken from an editorial by him in "The Andover Review" of January, 1893, entitled "The Satisfaction of Humanity in Jesus Christ,"[1] are well supplemented by the following extracts from a sermon preached in the First Congregational Church of Cambridge, Mass., in 1891, entitled "Life in Himself":[2]

I would deny no essential likeness of the human to the divine; but if we carry the likeness to the possibility of a divine humanity, we are not to overlook the fact that a difference in degree may amount to a difference in kind. I take a drop out of the ocean. The drop is like the ocean, but it is swayed by no tides, it bears no ships on its bosom, it does not unite continents. I take a grain of earth from a mountain. The grain is like the mountain but I can dig no quarries out of its bowels, I can cut no forests on its slopes, I do not see it lifting its summit to the first light of day. Man may be like God, but I locate Jesus not in the drop or the grain, but in the ocean

[1] Republished as a chapter of "The Divinity of Christ," by the editors of *The Review*.

[2] Published in *The Andover Review*, February, 1892.

and the mountain. . . . I grant the mystery of the incarnation, but I prefer mystery to insufficiency in my faith.

At another point Professor Tucker saw very clearly the true gains accruing to theology from the newer point of view, i.e., those contributed by Biblical criticism. This appears in an address given by him at the opening of Andover Seminary, September 16, 1891, entitled "The Authority of the Pulpit in a Time of Critical Research and Social Confusion." [1] In this notable address, after recognizing to the full the authority that grounds in religious experience and in the testimony of the church, he goes on to inquire into the real nature of a third source of authority, the Bible, and finds it, not in infallibility, but in life and in the manifest presence of God in its pages.

If the Reformation had given us as its first and chief result an infallible Bible, it would never have delivered us from an infallible church. . . . The power of the reformation did not consist in confronting one kind of infallibility with another but in confronting infallibility with life.[2]

Historical criticism, as he perceived, is the very thing that helps most to realize both the

[1] See *The Andover Review*, vol. XVI, p. 384.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 389.

interior values of the Bible and the reality of the Christ whom it presents. "It has put reality in place of infallibility in the chief seat of authority."[1] "Historical criticism has done away with the dilemma, terrible to many minds — either the Bible word for word, from cover to cover, or no Bible at all."[2] The spiritual result of historical criticism is "that eagerness of delight with which our generation rejoices in the recovered presence of the Christ of the Gospels."[3]

IV

Perhaps the largest and most statesmanly contribution which Professor Tucker has made to the newer religious thought is the principle, of which he was one of the foremost of the earlier heralds in this country, of *the spiritual meaning and value of the unity of humanity*. This is not the same as the "Social Gospel," though it underlies it and prepared the way for it. The chief utterance through which he called attention to this slowly emerging truth was his Phi Beta Kappa oration at Harvard University in 1892, "The New Movement in Human-

[1] See *The Andover Review*, vol. XVI, p. 390.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 391. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 391.

ity, from Liberty to Unity." [1] As an interpretation of the deeper inarticulate outreach of the mind of his time toward the higher life, this address was one of the most discerning in the history of American academic life. It is worthy of that high succession which includes Emerson's address, "The American Scholar."

The address was not primarily religious, much less theological, yet indefinably and in spirit it was both — as well as closely allied to educational and social advance. It was spoken at the moment when the force of individualism, which culminated in Emerson and Thoreau, had spent itself, or rather had reached the sense of need of something larger to supplement its deficiency, and when the limitation of the power of mere liberty to recreate society was beginning to be poignantly felt. Without in any wise minimizing the place and value of these essentials of civilization, individualism and liberty, Dr. Tucker unfolded the wealth of moral and spiritual value in the deepening sense of unity which was beginning to pervade the life and thought of the later years of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the most sug-

[1] Originally published in *The Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, later in pamphlet form and reprinted in *The New Reservation of Time*.

gestive part of the address is that in which the speaker pointed out the values of the new sense of unity to personality in such words as these:

I must continue to resist with all my nature the forces from without which are seeking to enslave me, be they many, be they great, be they of men, or of institutions or of philosophies and beliefs; but the personal forces which are seeking to enter in and become a part of my being, entering through inheritance, through friendship, through the mutual toil and struggle and mystery and faith, through the thousand ways in which I am open to the common humanity, these I must learn to recognize and understand, to treat with a wise discrimination and with a generous hospitality, else I shall certainly be less than I might be; my liberty will bring me only the narrowness of my own self; my individualism will end in isolation.[1]

The significance of the movement toward unity to Christianity — which originally "struck the note of universality" but has had to struggle through its entire history "to maintain its original scope" — is shown to be of the greatest consequence, especially in furthering the tendency toward coöperation[2]

[1] *The New Reservation of Time*, Appendix, p. 200.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 26. The course in "Social Economics" which Professor Tucker conducted in *The Andover Review*, as a kind of extension course, helped greatly to open the connection between sociology and religion which has since become so wide a channel of expansion to both.

and in the recognition of a common Christianity transcending all the "partialisms" which have hindered its progress. The origin and spring of the impulse toward unity Dr. Tucker found in "the sense of the organic in humanity," a bond which, as he truly said, "is far more than the knowledge of social rights and duties" and "in a very true sense lies below the ethical" and which he traced to that natural basis in the physical, which science had so lately uncovered. In locating our "organic union" in the possession of a common natural organism, rather than in the sharing of a common divine Life, or Reason — where Christian philosophy has commonly placed it — he chose the lesser rather than the greater bond of union, in harmony with the prevalent emphasis, though he would not have denied that it lies in both realms.

The trend away from the individualism of the older orthodoxy toward the larger principle of spiritual unity, which this address did so much to further, has been a powerful factor in shaping religious thought in the last twenty-five years. Through the influence of Dr. Tucker and others, many of whom caught their inspiration from him, the emphasis upon human

solidarity as a spiritual reality became an increasingly marked characteristic of the New Theology.

The power to seize upon essential issues, which Professor Tucker manifested in his religious thinking, he brought to bear also in all his ideas and plans for the advancement of the life and work of the church. He was among the first to see how essential it is for the churches to lay hold of the life of the community, especially its young life, and he was the originator of the (not altogether fortunate) term "the institutional church," as well as an earnest promoter of the movement itself.

In the recovery and reconstruction of the missionary motive from the old individualistic motive of salvation from hell to the larger one of personal realization and social salvation — the summoning of nations and races to the higher life — he was one of the outstanding leaders. In his presentation of it, the missionary enterprise took on the aspect of a vast and splendid divine-human adventure, replete with racial as well as eternal significance, appealing to the imagination as much, or more, as scientific discovery or great economic enterprise.

But in many respects his most characteristic venture was in behalf of a new crusade of Christian forces into the wastes of unredeemed life, which had been forming, almost unnoticed, at the very doors of the church. This took the form of college settlement work, the introduction of which in this country was largely due to him.

The Andover House, later the South End House, one of the pioneer college settlements in this country, was founded in Boston in 1891, chiefly through his enterprise and effort.[1] Its first head, Mr. Robert A. Woods, was trained under him at Andover Seminary, investigated the work of Arnold Toynbee in London under his supervision, and by the aid of his efforts was enabled to open the House. The South End House, by the wisdom and sympathy and

[1] In commenting upon the earlier attempts to relate Christianity to the organic life of society, Professor Rauschenbusch, in his *Christianizing the Social Order*, wrote: "So far as I know, Andover Seminary deserves the wreath of the pioneer. In 1879 Professor W. J. Tucker, now president of Dartmouth College, annexed a perfunctory lectureship in pastoral theology and turned it into a sociological course. An outline of the course was published in *The Andover Review* and stimulated other professors to undertake a similar work. The Andover House at Boston, 1891, was an outcome of these impulses" (p. 20, note). This statement needs correction in one particular. Professor Tucker annexed the sociological course to that in pastoral theology, which was far from being perfunctory.

organizing skill of Mr. Woods, has become the prototype, in many ways the model, of settlement work in America. If Mr. Woods has won the right to the title of the father of settlement work in America, Professor Tucker may well be called its godfather.

V

Dr. Tucker went from Andover Seminary in 1893, reluctantly and only after repeated solicitation from his *Alma Mater*, Dartmouth College, to become its president, leaving behind him an accomplished service of inestimable value. Into this fresh field of work he carried the same instinct and exercise of statesmanship, now to be directed more particularly to educational problems. The ideals and principles which he set at work and which have made him so individual a force in the educational world are admirably reflected, alongside of his ideals of citizenship, in his volume, "Public-Mindedness," published in 1910.[1]

One of his most valuable services in the field of education has been to differentiate, more clearly and satisfactorily than any other, the function of the college from that of the

[1] The Rumford Press, Concord, N.H.

technical school and the university. This was done in his inaugural address, "The Historic College: Its Place in the Educational System." The chief distinction which he there draws is in the emphasis which the college traditionally and normally places upon religion:

> There is a clear difference in the method and in the result of intellectual training, as you strike at the beginning the religious note, or the note of utility, or the note of culture. In other words, the college differs widely from the technical school, and measurably from the university, in the provision which it allows and makes for the religious element.

Then follows a striking delineation of the kind of religion that should characterize the college:

> Religion must not be set to do the menial tasks of the college, it must not be made an instrument of discipline; it must not become, through any kind of indifference, the repository of obsolete opinions or obsolete customs; it must not fall below the intellectual life of the college; it must not be used to maintain any artificial relation between the college and its constituency. Religion justifies the traditions which give it place within the college, as it enforces the spirit of reverence and humility, as it furnishes the rational element to faith, as it informs duty with the sufficient motive and lends the sufficient inspiration to ideals of service and as

it subdues and consecrates personal ambition to the interests of the common humanity.[1]

In the confusing problem of the readjustment of the college curriculum no one has seen so clearly as he the fact that the real issue lies in the spirit in which study is pursued rather than in the subject. "We have silently abandoned," he declared, "the idea that the chief ethical value of college instruction lies in the curriculum." "If utility can create the knowing mind, we want its aid. I would accept at any time the moral result of serious thinking on the inferior subject in place of less serious thinking upon the greater subject." [2] In infusing high ideals and the newer religious viewpoint into the life of his students President Tucker seized an opportunity of very great moment in the Sunday vesper services in the college chapel. The addresses which he gave at these services made a deep impression. An example of the way in which he used this opportunity for the quickening of personal power is to be found in the volume "Personal Power: Counsels to College Men" (1910). These addresses vibrate with magnetic force. Rugby Chapel and Thomas

[1] *Public-Mindedness*, p. 211.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 314.

Arnold have had their American counterpart in Rollins Chapel and William Jewett Tucker.[1]

VI

It is indicative of the breadth of Dr. Tucker's loyalties and the vigor of his sense of ethical obligation that he has faced all social duties — moral, religious, educational — in the light of citizenship. He has the *public mind* and his has been an eloquent advocacy of "public-mindedness" — one of the words that he has raised out of obscurity to the peerage by using it as a title for his collected public addresses. For ethical integrity, intellectual alertness, and spiritual appeal, it would be difficult to match the addresses upon citizenship which are reproduced in this volume. In them he shows himself master of the ideals and principles of Christian citizenship and of the power to put these in a quickening and inspiring light.

[1] The influence which President Tucker has had over Dartmouth students is finely expressed in an address to the Class of 1899 at its fifteenth year reunion, by Professor Kau-Ichi Asakawa, a member of the class. At the close of this tribute Mr. Asakawa said: "The source of Dr. Tucker's power was purely spiritual; it was the surrender of self, reverence and humility, reinforced by his intense nature. The ultimate results of service born of such a source must necessarily far exceed the results that are known to its author. We all carry some of these results. Through us they shall multiply" (*Alumni Magazine*, March, 1915).

Perhaps he never made a more telling speech than that in which he addressed himself to direct combat with a serious evil that threatened the good name of the State of New Hampshire. I refer to the speech, "The New England Breeders' Club," delivered at Manchester, N.H., January 14, 1906.[1] Here, in the person of the president of Dartmouth College, appeared the scholar in politics at his best, thoroughly in earnest and as thoroughly informed, meeting the narrowness of an acute and skillful group of designing men with an exposure of the motives and effects of their designs upon the people as keen and piercing as it was fair and above vituperation. There was no cheap sentiment in the speech, no stage thunder of moral invective, no puritanic disdain of the devotees of sport or of the common herd who patronize it. The speaker recognized the legitimacy of clean sport. "Personally I may go further than some of you," he declared, "in my advocacy of out-of-door sports. I believe in them. Recreation is not enough. Sport, organized sport, has a legitimate place in our modern life." Having conceded this, he went on to claim that "there is a vast difference between

[1] *Public-Mindedness*, p. 177.

an evil like that of betting, which may be incidental to any contest (men may bet on an election), and the same evil organized into a sport and made by the majority the sport itself." [1] Such distinctions as this are not common in that academic world which prides itself on its power of making distinctions; but they tell on the civilian moral sense. They told upon the minds of President Tucker's hearers. At all events, the license of the New England Breeders' Club was repealed; and the State of New Hampshire will not soon forget this speech.

Not only in this instance, but in others Dr. Tucker showed that he was alive and aggressive toward any infraction of the rights and privileges of the people. When benevolent patronage came forward in the person of Andrew Carnegie with a definite theory of the use of wealth and a gift to enforce it that seemed to him, however generous and beneficent, inimical to the true spirit of democracy, he was quick to see the veiled danger and to speak the word of warning. In a paper published in "The Andover Review" of June, 1891, entitled "The Gospel of Wealth," he analyzed, in fair but searching fashion, the theory of the

[1] *Public-Mindedness*, p. 184.

trusteeship of wealth which Mr. Carnegie had put forth in his article under the above title in "The North American Review." He challenged the theory in the name not only of morality but of religion. "I can conceive of no greater mistake," he said, "more disastrous in the end to religion if not to society, than that of trying to make charity do the work of justice." [1]

When one pauses to recall that this challenge came from a man with no grievance and no ulterior purpose, holding a chair in an institution endowed by men in the same class with Mr. Carnegie, the courage and significance of it is evident. It came from one who clearly felt it his duty, against his inclination to be silent, to uphold the religious and ethical ideals which he was set to teach and defend. The truth and justice of this challenge has become more and more evident as time has made clearer both the unrivaled beneficence of Mr. Carnegie's princely gifts and the fallacy of his theory, belonging as it does to the decadent conceptions of a passing régime. The conscience and intelligence of America has come to endorse the statement of Dr. Tucker in an "Atlantic Monthly" article, "Notes on

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. XV, no. 90, p. 634.

the Progress of the Social Conscience": "If the few can 'administer wealth for the community far better than it could or would do for itself,' then democracy has reached the limit of its intelligence and responsibility." [1]

Such citizenship as this, civic, democratic, national, could not but prove also international. When the Great War broke out, President Tucker, now retired and unhampered by official responsibility, did not — as did so many men of a more superficial sort — break out also. On the contrary, he set himself to the task of serious and careful reflection. The result appeared in two notable articles in "The Atlantic Monthly": "The Ethical Challenge of the War" (June, 1915) and "The Crux of the Peace Problem" (April, 1916).[2] In the first of these articles the deceptiveness of the theory of the state as *power* is depicted and the danger pointed out that even a democratic state may fall under the "allurements of power." In the second article — which is worthy of becoming a classic in peace literature — is set forth the need of an aggressive note, the note of moral conquest, in the ideal of peace if it is to com-

[1] See also: *The New Reservation of Time*, p. 86.

[2] Both articles are republished in *The New Reservation of Time*.

mand the loyalty and enthusiasm of strong and heroic minds. The Christian spirit, as Dr. Tucker makes clear, calls for no "piping peace" of moral lassitude and passionless pietism, but one in which the bugles of moral watchfulness and self-conquest sound the "reaffirmation of the great loyalties," a peace that can be attained and kept only at the cost of moral sacrifice.

VII

Courage and sagacity: these have been characteristic traits of Dr. Tucker, ethical valor and intellectual outlook. But at the root of these strong qualities there has slept a spring of inner refreshment and benignity without which he could never have won the place he holds in the affection of his generation nor have achieved the finer of his accomplished tasks. We may best describe this trait in one of his favorite words, interpreted in a characteristic way, "sympathy." Sympathy, in his interpretation of it, is "the Christian term for contact." "It is the most concrete and sensitive expression of both love and justice. The kind of consideration which it demands of one man in behalf of another is expressed in the personal

words 'Put yourself in his place.'" [1] That kind of sympathy he has cherished, cultivated, exemplified. It is the finest fruit of personal culture, "a hard and reluctant virtue, as any one can discover for himself," [2] but when acquired it makes its possessor a prince among men.

There are three classes of men for whom Dr. Tucker has had an especial sympathy — students, ministers, and workingmen. Of his sympathy for students we have already spoken. They were his intellectual and spiritual kin. He understood their hopes and aims, their problems and temptations, and he knew how to help them. His availing sympathy for the younger members of his own earlier profession has found expression in a most penetrative, wise, and sympathetic study of the opportunities and dangers of personality in a profession wherein the testing is severe and subtle — "The Making and Unmaking of the Preacher." These unique Lyman Beecher lectures for 1898 present an analysis, not of preaching but of the preacher. What will *make* the young preacher, set as he is, in a place of peculiar power and danger? What will *unmake* him? If any one knew the con-

[1] *The Church in Modern Society*, p. 64.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

stituents of this subtle spiritual alchemy, it was Dr. Tucker. With a skill as consummate as his sympathy, he presses home upon the preacher successively the demands of the truth itself, of his art, and of the men to whom he brings his message. Yet he does not leave him alone under the weight of these responsibilities. The reinforcements which come to one's aid in meeting these demands are also richly and humanly presented.

The finest, because the rarest and least to be expected, of Dr. Tucker's sympathies is that for workingmen. There was no especial incentive for this fellow feeling, in experience or contact or circumstance. It arose out of pure chivalry, aroused by an intelligent perception of a field of human activity where sympathy is needed and deserved. Its roots doubtless run back into his first pastorate in Manchester, where he came in touch with the industrial population of that old manufacturing city. But the transfer thence to Madison Square Presbyterian Church in New York and thence to the professorship of Sacred Rhetoric in Andover Theological Seminary might easily have broken this contact, had it not been for his insight into the problem of the church as related to industrialism and also

his deep chivalrous sympathy for the great masses of his fellow-men engaged in a useful and honorable service, which appealed to his imagination as well as to his sympathy, yet whose real claims to social consideration were so little recognized.

The initial impulse of his sympathy for workingmen lay not so much in the fact that they were socially and economically "down" as that they were bent upon *rising* and *were* rising. Here is a species of sympathy that escapes most men, — sympathy for those who are climbing the social ladder and may come to occupy one of its rungs with them. "Sympathy," said Dr. Tucker, "is the appreciation of the endeavor and ambition to rise to higher levels; it is, above all, the willingness to make room for men as they rise and to welcome them to the places they have earned." [1]

VIII

This indispensable and to him characteristically Christian sympathy Dr. Tucker called upon the church to exercise, in that remarkably concise document of Christian leadership, "The

[1] "The Authority of the Pulpit," *The Andover Review*, October, 1891, p. 396.

Church in Modern Society" (1911).[1] The two ministries which he puts forth in this volume as those through which the church can best fulfill its function to modern society are authority and sympathy. To these two ministries he has summoned the church of to-day. After a period of uncertainty and theological reconstruction, it is time, he asserts, for the church to regain and to exercise, in all humility, her spiritual authority. This is her first duty, and the second is like unto it, sympathy: "The history of the church proves by too frequent illustration how empty a thing is authority without sympathy, and how weak a thing is sympathy without authority." [2] It is in the failure of the church to sympathize that she has lost her hold on the laboring-man: "The church lost contact with the workingman by failing to understand him, much more to estimate him, by failing to sympathize with his ambition and purpose to rise, and by failing to do what it might have done to make a sufficient place for him in the social order." [3]

Dr. Tucker's own sympathy for the men and women of the industrial world was not only

[1] A volume in the series "Modern Religious Problems."

[2] *The Church in Modern Society*, p. 3. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

thoroughly manly and on the level of a common humanity, it was confirmed by a careful study and understanding of the labor problem. As a result of this understanding he became one of the earliest and most intelligent clerical supporters of trade-unionism. Without it he saw that the wage-earner could never have bettered his condition. "I doubt if one-quarter of the gain [in the betterment of the condition of labor] could have been gained in any other way," he declared in an address, "The Mind of the Wage-Earner," before the twentieth annual convention of the Officials of Labor Bureaus of America in 1904. "Trade-unionism is the business method of effecting the betterment of the wage-earner under the highly organized conditions of the modern industrial world." [1] To further the uplift of labor he was anxious to see the "mobility" as well as the nobility of labor maintained, and the channels of its communication with other departments of life, especially education, kept open, so that there would be no sense of alienation and class solidarity begotten by the sense of a "grievance." [2] Few laboring-men will ever know how true a friend they have in President Tucker —

[1] *Public-Mindedness*, p. 170. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

another evidence of the chasms that separate us — but if they knew, their cause could not but seem to them higher and larger and less selfish than they had conceived it to be.

All of these sympathies of Dr. Tucker bear the marks of their intellectual and ethical character. They are the outgoings of a mind swift to see where sympathy is due and of a will trained to put itself in the other's place. Yet the springs that feed this intellectual and moral interest lie deep in the heart of the man. As Dr. George A. Gordon has said of him, "he is one of the rarest of men, a leader and lover of men." One of the things which most impressed those of us into whom as professor of Homiletics, he tried to instill the passion and the art of preaching was his insistence that one must *love* his people. He was fond of telling his classes of a man in a certain congregation who plucked the sleeve of the preacher as he came down from the pulpit and said to him, "You love to preach,—do you love men?" An incident in his experience, related in one of his Yale lectures, lets one far into the working of his own mind in this regard:

> I may be pardoned if I refer to an experience . . . in my own early ministry. I had prepared a sermon

which had been, I doubt not, profitable to me, but which was so utterly ineffective as a sermon that I took the liberty of asking a very discerning friend what was the difficulty with it. His reply was the best criticism I ever received. "You seemed to me," he said, "to be more concerned about the truth than about men." Yes, that was the difficulty. I saw it in a moment.

Dr. Tucker's love for men is not of the sentimental order. It is of the sort he himself described in his noble address at the Annapolis Naval Academy, on "The Study of Greatness." Greatness, as he views it, has three chief traits — originality, authority, and beneficence; and the greatest of these is beneficence. Without it the other two lack fruitful issue.

> Give the term what range you will, allow the widest determination, be tolerant of motives and methods, but never surrender this ingredient or factor of greatness; do not make greatness a synonym of force, not even in the shape of intellectualism.[1]

That is a test of greatness which "not many wise, not many mighty" are able to meet. Yet only those who can meet it are entitled to be called great. This "lover of men" is, for many, among that number. In him his contemporaries have seen — to make surreptitious use of his

[1] *Public-Mindedness*, p. 343.

own words — "one of their own number actually becoming great, by taking up into himself the material which is common to them all, but which they cannot assimilate or control. He sees the things which lie unnoted, perhaps undiscovered, at their feet. He rules with the ease of power among the forces which they feel but cannot master. He is supremely, almost divinely, beneficent, under the very conditions and before the very difficulties to which they succumb in a complaining or despairing weakness."[1]

IX

It may seem as if in tracing, somewhat consecutively, the service and influence of one whose work has lain so largely in the educational field we had gone far beyond the precincts of theology. Nevertheless Dr. Tucker has not ceased to be a theologian in whatever form of service he has engaged. He has been one of the most watchful and sympathetic interpreters of the changing religious thought of our time.

While all of the members of the group of theological reconstructionists to which he belonged were, in differing manner and degree, modern, Dr. Tucker was the most intensely

[1] *Public-Mindedness*, p. 339.

and actively modern among them. This passion to understand and to interpret the religious life of his own time appears in the subject chosen for his Lowell Institute lectures (1894), "The Influence of Religion To-day," in the Stone lectures (1895–97), "The Effect of Democracy on Religious Progress," in his lectures at Union Theological Seminary (1902), and at the Pacific School of Religion (1906), "Modern Christianity," and indeed in all his utterances. Nor was his interest confined to interpretation. It led him, as we have seen, to definite and tireless action in the endeavor to mold society to its true ends. Those were well-chosen words in which the successor of President Tucker conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws upon his honored predecessor in the hush of "a spontaneous thrill of emotion which brought the entire audience to its feet"; "William Jewett Tucker, ninth president and second founder of Dartmouth College, the depth and richness of your inner life, the activity and achievement of your outward life, will be a heritage twice blessed to this college forevermore." [1] To maintain "depth and richness of inner life" in the midst of "activity and achieve-

[1] *Dartmouth College: Inauguration of President Nichols*, p. 83.

ment of outward life" is a rare attainment, especially as it has meant in his case also maintaining close contact with the religious and social progress of his time.

How closely and sympathetically he has kept in touch with the social movement is evidenced in his striking paper in "The Atlantic Monthly" of September, 1915, "Notes on the Progress of the Social Conscience," republished in that genial fruitage of his alert retirement, "The New Reservation of Time." In this article he summarizes the progress of the social conscience as follows:

> The social conscience has done very much to refurnish the public mind with ideas and principles and with conceptions of duty fit and adequate to the new demands of society. In particular it may be claimed that it has reinstated the conception of justice above that of charity in the ethics of philanthropy; that it has recalled liberty to a service in behalf of economic freedom similar to that rendered in behalf of political freedom; that it has awakened a "sense of the state" corresponding to the increase of political responsibilities; that it has made society sensitive to the inhumanities of industrialism, and is teaching society to estimate the property rights which are involved in human rights; and that it is creating an open mind toward the entrance of woman into civic life.[1]

[1] *The New Reservation of Time*, pp. 117, 118.

The modern spirit of which Dr. Tucker has been so marked a representative is very different from that other and more recent type of modernity which is cheap, popular, faddish, which identifies the modern spirit with renunciation of all indebtedness to the past, which talks only in to-day's slang, glorifies the latest theory, and confuses modernity with the passing notion. Against this tin-pan type of modernity such seriousness and penetration as his would put us on guard as earnestly as against "the superficial and faithless interpretation of our times." From heights far above the clamor that cheapens life by demanding a false leveling down comes his voice, ringing with the sincerity of a great challenge, calling for a leveling up:

> Let us keep the path for the democracy of toil and struggle open to the last material reward to which it is entitled. Let us keep the path of the democracy of the mind open through every grade of education to the last training of the university. Let us keep the path for the democracy of the soul open to every spiritual privilege, even if in so doing we must needs reconstruct our churches.[1]

[1] *Public-Mindedness*, p. 14.

CHAPTER V

EGBERT C. SMYTH AND THE ANDOVER THEOLOGY

EGBERT COFFIN SMYTH[1]

1829. August 24. Born in Brunswick, Me.
1848. Graduated from Bowdoin College.
1849. Taught in Farmington, N.H.
1851. Entered Bangor Theological Seminary, graduating in 1854.
1854. Resident Licentiate at Andover Seminary.
1856. Ordained at Brunswick, Me.
1856. Called to chair of Natural Religion and Revelation, Bowdoin College.
1857. August 12. Married Elizabeth Bradford Dwight, daughter of Rev. William Dwight, D.D., of Portland, Me.
1862–63. Studied in Berlin and Halle Universities.
1863. Became professor of Ecclesiastical History, Andover Theological Seminary.
1866. Received degree of Doctor of Divinity from Bowdoin College.
1875. Elected a member of the Prudential Committee of the American Board.
1877. Elected a trustee of Bowdoin College. Served until his death.
1884. Became one of the founders of *The Andover Review*.
1886. Received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Harvard University.
1886. Subjected to the charge of heresy.
1887. Condemned for heresy by the Board of Visitors of Andover Seminary. Appealed to the Supreme Court of Massachusetts.
1890. Trial before the Supreme Court.
1891. Decision of the Supreme Court declaring the removal of Professor Smyth by the Board of Visitors illegal and invalid.
1903. Presentation of a portrait of Professor Smyth to the Seminary by pupils and friends.
1904. February 4. Death of Mrs. Smyth.
1904. April 12. Died at Andover.
1904. June 8. Commemorative Service at Andover.

[1] Professor Smyth changed the pronunciation of his family name to Smith.

CHAPTER V

EGBERT C. SMYTH AND THE ANDOVER THEOLOGY

A TRUE conservative attacked for liberalism, a defender of orthodoxy tried for heterodoxy, a friend of foreign missions accused as its foe,— Egbert Coffin Smyth was a man whose true measure has been understood by few. Thirty years ago he was the unwilling storm-center of a theological controversy whose receding tide may seem to have left little trace upon the religious thought of to-day, yet which, through his wisdom, courage, and stedfastness, registered a victory for the cause of religious freedom whose consequences will be felt for many generations.

I

Here was an institutional man, in the best sense, — the product and servant of New England religious and educational institutions. An old-style New England academy, Dummer,

a typical New England college, Bowdoin, a venerable New England theological school, Bangor, and another still more venerable, Andover, and above all and through all this, the Church of the Pilgrims and Puritans, were the institutions from which he freely received and to which he freely gave. The son of William Smyth, professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in Bowdoin College from 1823 to 1868, he breathed from boyhood the atmosphere of this high-minded college. To it, he gave his first academic service, commencing his career in 1854 as professor of Rhetoric and Oratory. Two years later he was transferred to the chair of Natural and Revealed Religion. In 1863, after a year's theological study in Berlin and Halle Universities, he became professor of Ecclesiastical History in Andover Seminary. He was made president of the Andover faculty in 1878 and continued in that office eighteen years. In 1857, while still at Bowdoin, Professor Smyth married Elizabeth Bradford Dwight, a lineal descendant of that Sarah Pierpont, wife of Jonathan Edwards, who "seemed to be always full of joy and pleasure and no one knew for what." [1] Mrs. Smyth was like-minded

[1] See J. V. H. Allen: *Jonathan Edwards*, p. 46.

and like-hearted with her husband, a lover of the church of the Puritans, deeply devoted to many good causes, especially that of Christian missions. Together, these two kindred spirits made of the venerable and attractive old house on the edge of the Andover campus a veritable House Beautiful, "erected by the Lord of the hill for the relief and refreshment of Pilgrims." Students, especially, found here a haven and home never to be forgotten.

In personal bearing as well as in character Professor Smyth was the soul of simplicity, sincerity, and quiet dignity. His most striking feature was his eyes, which were dark, luminous, searching, and unfathomably kind. I cannot forget the first impression they made upon me as he greeted me, a new student, in his library. They seemed to search out one's inmost soul and at the same time to give himself in sympathetic self-impartation. That initial meeting was followed by many kindnesses and hospitalities, including a visit which he made to my room a few days after my arrival, to see if the new student had a lamp and stove and the customary equipment to make one of those monastic cells in old Bartlet Hall a little less mortifying to the flesh. A Sunday evening in his

home, devoted to Christian hymns, is a memory which I recall with peculiar pleasure. The hymns were not sung, but read by him with rare expression and illuminating comment. The evening was filled with spirit wings and voices.

There was a rare union of gentleness and courage in this Christian scholar that made him at once enviable as a friend and formidable as a foe. His luminous eyes, the home of contemplation, could flash with fire, and his voice, customarily calm and gentle, could grow tense and vibrant with conviction and emotion when he was aroused. We of the student body knew well these traits in him, yet what impressed us most, I think, was the steadiness and charity with which he bore himself during his accusation and trial, and the imperturbability with which he fulfilled his seminary duties throughout a controversy that sadly disturbed the serenity of a life devoted to the quiet pursuits of the Christian scholar. A typical scholar he was, yet not apart from his kind. "If one were near him," wrote Dr. Alexander McKenzie, "it was easy to see how rich and generous his nature was." [1]

[1] Massachusetts Historical Society Reports, Second Series, vol. XVIII, p. 299.

II

Professor Smyth brought to Andover, at a time when its forensic fame outshone its scholarship, a scholarly spirit and attainment of the finest quality. Perhaps no greater, certainly no profounder, theological scholar has appeared in America. All of his habits of mind and work were characterized by insight and thoroughness. Yet he was not scholar only, but leader. When the light of Professor Park waned, he became the most vital force in the Seminary and the center of that group of leaders who founded "The Andover Review," and who made Andover the herald and missioner of a forward movement which has done much to liberate and expand religious thought. It was a company of men of rare ability and attractiveness, as the writer found when he entered the Seminary in 1886: William J. Tucker, alert, able, magnetic, a genuine leader and one "who marched breast forward"; John W. Churchill, a man of genial and gracious personality, master of the art of public speech; George Harris, theologian of the new day, untrammeled, unconventional, undogmatic, concerned with the ethical rather than the specu-

lative, at home with the students, and possessed of a dry humor that was no slight assistant in purging theology of cant and convention,[1] and Edward Y. Hincks, one of the most earnest of scholars and thinkers, who put conscience and judgment into every position he took and into every piece of work he did and who bore with him to Cambridge the spiritual strength and integrity of Andover Hill. These were the leaders of the "Andover Movement." Associated with them on the faculty, and in hearty sympathy with them, were John P. Gulliver, trained in the older thought but hospitable to the new; John P. Taylor, in whom culture and kindliness blended; Frank E. Woodruff, able New Testament scholar; and George F. Moore, whose brilliant, accurate, and extensive scholarship made his students marvel and who has brought honor both to Andover and to Harvard University. Of this faculty, the first five constituted the Seminary's theological athletic team, heartily supported by the rest; and notable teamwork they did, each gaining thereby the strength of the whole and throwing his own into it with complete devotion. Without the least assump-

[1] Dr. Harris has published *Moral Evolution* (1896); *Inequality and Progress* (1897); *A Century's Change in Religion* (1914).

tion, Professor Smyth, by right of years and courtesy of prior standing, as well as attainment, became the recognized head of the group.

The story of the rise of the "Andover Theology," the contest of the faculty with the home secretary of the American Board, and of the attempt on the part of a company of self-appointed accusers to remove the five offending professors from their chairs, may be found in the current prints and has been more adequately retold by one of their own number.[1] These men were no sinecurists. Without in any way neglecting their duties as teachers and scholars, in the midst of their service to the churches and the annoyances of controversial disturbance, they established and edited a monthly theological review, which at once took its place as the leading religious review of America. The service of "The Andover Review" (1884–1903) in behalf of theological and educational advance was large. It was not only free and intelligent in its attitude toward theological and ecclesiastical questions, but its pages contained fresh discussions of educational, philosophical, and literary topics, always in the temper and spirit of vital Christianity. Among its contributors were

[1] See W. J. Tucker: *My Generation*, pp. 101–221.

George H. Palmer, George A. Gordon, Francis H. Johnson, S. W. Dike, Joseph Le Conte, William T. Harris, A. P. Peabody, C. C. Everett, C. C. Starbuck, B. P. Bowne, Bliss Perry, John Dewey, W. D. Hyde, and others of like caliber. The editorials were frankly and freely devoted in large part to the issues immediately at stake with its editors and were largely instrumental in clarifying and furthering their cause. The opening article of the first number, by Professor Smyth, on "The Theological Purpose of the Review," was a clear and able statement of the purposes and aims of a conservatively progressive theology. It offered as a key-note a phrase used by a leader of the early church, Ignatius, "Let us learn to think according to Christianity"; and the kind of thought which it advocated was one true both to the past and to the future of Christianity.

III

In estimating Professor Smyth's contribution to American theology one naturally begins with his work as a historian. The extent of his knowledge and resources in this field cannot be fully appreciated for the reason that he published so little. The note-books of his students, however,

reveal something of his character as scholar and teacher. In looking over my notes of his course in Church History, I am struck by the wisdom and wealth they disclose as I could not be at the time they were taken, although even then they kindled my admiration. The course commenced with an illuminating discussion of the meaning and value of history, which was defined as "the representation of events in the life of man in their origin, law of succession, place, character, influence, and end." The discussion of the principle of development in history is particularly noteworthy. The lecturer recognized its pertinence and value, but pointed out that "history is not to be identified with development." "There is," he asserted, "a radical difference between the growth of a plant or animal and that of a soul. . . . Spiritual development proceeds under a law of freedom, and it belongs to the essence of freedom that there should be a choice of ends. . . . A process common to Balaam and his ass cannot give us particular knowledge. Development clarifies and intensifies the study of causes, but leads, after all, to the study of causes." Next were taken up in turn the sources, methods, and divisions of church history, followed by a survey of each of the main epochs,

eras, and periods. Chief attention was given to the ancient church and to the history of doctrine. The history of Christology as related to the doctrine of the Trinity was especially thorough and thoughtful. The mediæval era was briefly but lucidly outlined. The modern era received limited but suggestive treatment. It included a number of sagacious estimates of men and movements and closed with an extremely perspicuous survey of Kant's theology, in which both the sufficiencies and insufficiencies of the Kantian system were pointed out. The theologian left before the mind at the close of the course was, most fittingly, Schleiermacher, the founder of modern theology. The concluding word was a pertinent one concerning the relation of the permanent to the varying elements in doctrine, as disclosed in its history. It is quite possible that these lectures were too far above the heads of the students. Dr. Alexander McKenzie said of them that they were "the work of a scholar for men who desired to be scholars." [1] But they fostered a catholic and comprehensive view of history and left a lasting impression on the minds of all his pupils.

[1] Massachusetts Historical Society, Second Series, vol. XVIII, p. 298.

While the lectures reveal the breadth and compass of Dr. Smyth's knowledge of church history as a whole, he had also chosen and specialized subjects of study and investigation. Chief of these was the founder of New England theology, Jonathan Edwards, many of whose unpublished manuscripts came into his hands through Mrs. Smyth. He published an account of some of the earlier of these manuscripts and printed one in full in "The Andover Review" — the remarkably interesting paper, "The Flying Spider," written when Edwards was a boy.[1] The address given by him at the exercises commemorating the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Edwards, at Andover, his review of Allen's life of Edwards,[2] and his notable article on "Jonathan Edwards' Idealism," in "The American Journal of Theology," [3] constitute the most discerning and appreciative interpretation of Edwards that has yet been made.

Professor Smyth was not only a historian, but a systematic theologian. He advanced from historical study to constructive thought, gaining thereby the large advantage of building

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. XIII, no. 73, pp. 1–19.

[2] *Ibid.*, no. 75, pp. 285–304.

[3] Vol. I, no. 4, pp. 950–64.

theology upon the foundation of historically experienced and tested truth. I have termed him, as have others, a conservative. He was such, in the sense of one who, in Tennyson's phrase, "lops the moldering branch away," yet conserves all that has true life in it. Yet in his open-minded attitude toward truth he was a progressive. From his study of history he came to realize more fully the need of a "progressive orthodoxy," of constant advance in the interpretation and application of Christianity, and he had very clear and strong convictions as to the nature of Christian truth and the direction which doctrinal development should take in the future. In spite of the detached and occasional character of his writings it is not difficult to determine the convictions and ideas which were foremost in his thinking. To these our attention will now be turned.

IV

In his conception of the nature of religious truth, Professor Smyth was clearly and convincedly an intuitionist. This is brought out in a striking and characteristic manner in the lecture, "From Lessing to Schleiermacher, or from Rationalism to Faith," which he gave in

1870, in the course of Boston lectures on "Christianity and Skepticism." In this lecture he first makes a searching analysis of rationalism, as exemplified in Lessing, concluding that while "whatever is erroneous in this higher Rationalism may be overcome, what is true and legitimate in it must be accepted." With Lessing's rationalism he contrasts — clearly to the former's disadvantage — *faith*, as it appears in Schleiermacher, "whose principle is, in a word, that of Immediateness." "More fully stated it is this: 'The soul is created for religious communion, and, in this communion, attains to religious certainty'" [1] This immediacy is not, however, irrational. For, as Dr. Smyth —both expounding and following Schleiermacher — goes on to show, immediate knowledge, in the sphere of religion, is not merely subjective and individual; it is capable of verification. "Every intuition of reason, every species of knowledge founded in immediate consciousness, every ultimate principle, is susceptible of verification. If genuine, it will stand all the tests of the understanding, of logic, of experience, of history, of life. The knowledge is not grounded in these tests. The certainty is immediately given.

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. I, no. 4, p. 296.

Yet the tests guard against mistake." [1] Thus distinctly, fully, and understandingly he adopts and defends the intuitive method of religious knowledge; and this viewpoint governs all of his thinking.

V

The dominating — one might almost say passionate — interest of a mind so devotedly attached to Christ was, quite naturally, Christology. If the New Theology is Christocentric, in Egbert Smyth it is thrice accentuated. He understood, better perhaps than any American theologian of his time, the place occupied by Christ in the history of Christian doctrine. He was a modern Athanasian. He valued very highly the logos doctrine of Clement and Origen, but it was the eternal sonship doctrine of Athanasius which appealed to him as the final evaluation of Christ. No one realized better than he the central place of Christ in the greatest eras of Christian theology. He knew how constitutive and controlling was His place in the sub-apostolic as well as in the apostolic church.[2] He understood how potent and per-

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. I, no. 4, p. 308.

[2] See *The Divinity of our Lord*, chaps. IV and V.

sistent was the mystical presence of Christ both in Catholicism and in Protestantism. He knew how significant and vitalizing was the reaffirmation of the Christocentric position by Schleiermacher [1] and later by Dorner and others, and how essential it is to maintain and advance this position.

To this historical estimate of the place of Christ his own personal conviction gave confirmation. The result was a theology in which Christ is supreme. "Everything in Christianity centers in Christ.[2] The possibility, the unity, the unification, of a science of divinity are given in Him and in Him alone." [3] Christian theology was to him nothing if not Christocentric. By "Christocentric Theology" he meant, "not a theology that centers in what is commonly understood by the words 'historic Christ,' but one which centers in God as revealed in Christ." [4]

This, to him, was the essence of the New Theology. The whole aim and motive of the protagonists of progressive orthodoxy was, as

[1] See lecture referred to above.

[2] *Progressive Orthodoxy*, p. 7.

[3] *The Andover Review*, vol. I, no. 1, p. 2.

[4] *The Andover Defence*, p. 171.

he viewed it, "under the guidance of a central and vital principle of Christianity, — namely, the reality of Christ's personal relation to the human race as a whole and to every member of it, — the principle of the universality of Christianity." [1] By this principle every proposed advance is to be tested. "The point always to be determined with reference to any alleged improvement is whether it promotes the knowledge of the central principle of Christianity in itself or in its operations." [2] "A theology which is not Christocentric is like a Ptolemaic astronomy,— it is out of true relation to the earth and the heavens, to God and his universe." [3] In defining the nature of Christ which warrants this universalizing, Professor Smyth lays the strongest emphasis upon the "uniqueness of his humanity." [4] From this he passes to the unity of His Person,— a progressive unity of the human and divine attained in the act of incarnation. This assures the absoluteness of Christ, not only in redemption but in creation.

This is a more intensive as well as a more thoroughly historical Christology than that of any other of the members of the New Theology

[1] *Progressive Orthodoxy*, p. 3.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 13. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 36. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

group. They caught the significance of Christ in the Gospels and the breadth and scope of His impact upon human life and destiny. He, too, was fully alive to this, but he probed more deeply into that which lies behind the influence of Christ and which led to the origin and development of the doctrine of His person and its metaphysical implications. Perhaps — in line with his predecessors — he endeavored to go too far in this direction. Deep things do not readily yield their secret to the understanding. But it is well to let the mind move freely and fearlessly in this great realm, if it does not become scholastic, and the intellectual speculation of this balanced thinker is never barren or dogmatic.

Based upon this conception of the Eternal Sonship of Christ, Professor Smyth's Trinitarianism was exceptionally wide and deep, though it was never concentrated in any single discussion. Dr. Gordon has said of him that "he could have written a better book on Nicene theology than any man of his time, but he did not write it." Yet he taught and disseminated it; and American theology is the richer for his reinterpretation of Nicene theology.

VI

Superficially associated with the insistence — on the part of Dr. Smyth and his colleagues — upon the universality of Christianity and the central significance of the incarnation, was the famous — or (in the minds of its opponents) infamous — Andover theory of "Future Probation." The theory, as put forth in the volume by the editors of "The Andover Review," "Progressive Orthodoxy" (1885), is, in brief, "that those who do not know of God's love in Christ while they are in the body will have knowledge of Christ after death." [1] "Our belief is that somewhere and sometime God will reveal himself to every one in the face of Jesus Christ, and that the destiny of each and all is determined by the relation to Christ. If we did not believe this, Christianity would no longer be for us the universal religion, and the teaching that Christ is Son of Man, the universal man, the Head of humanity, would be robbed of its significance." [2] These words were not written by Professor Smyth and the hypothesis itself did not originate at Andover but with Newman Smyth of New Haven. Still, there is no

[1] *Progressive Orthodoxy*, p. 93. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

question but that he shared fully with the other editors of "The Review" in advancing it as an alternative to the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the heathen in the eschatological controversy into which the Seminary faculty had been plunged.

The hypothesis, whatever may be said in behalf of its adoption as a war measure, was a weak one, philosophically, ethically, and theologically; and while it seemed on the surface to be in accord with the Christocentric position, it was in reality fundamentally out of accord with it. This was shown conclusively in one of the most searching and effective criticisms in the history of American theology — the article in "The Andover Review" entitled "Some Criticisms of the Andover Movement," [1] by Rev. Frederic Palmer, D.D., at that time rector of the Episcopal church in Andover, since 1913 editor of "The Harvard Theological Review." The article commences with a genuine and generous tribute to Andover. "I have had from the first a very hearty sympathy with Andover's new departure," wrote Mr. Palmer. "It has, in my opinion, brought more healthy life into the religious world of New England than any other

[1] Vol. XIII, p. 181.

movement of the century." Then, after pointing out the controversial conditions under which the Andover theology took shape, the writer describes its philosophical defects. These consist (1) in a failure to make the Christocentric principle of judgment universal, (2) in retaining too much of the hard and fast line between scriptural revelation and reason, (3) in regarding human and divine as mutually exclusive terms, and (4) in failing to recognize completely the Divine immanence in human life and history, especially the immanence of Christ.

> Its belief in the immanence of God has not been absorbed into its teachings, while of the immanence of Christ it has hardly a conception. . . . Its Christology vacillates between the old forensic view of Christ's work, caused by the attempt to drop a historic event bodily into the domain of the spiritual and make it do duty as part of an eternal process, and a perception of St. Paul's use of the term "Christ," as not only the title of Jesus, but the elucidative name of those eternal processes taking place in his soul, and in the soul of humanity, of which the historic Jesus was the climactic and complete revelation.[1]

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. XIII, p. 200. Without seeking to segregate Professor Smyth's views from those of his colleagues, it is worthy of note that the criticisms of Mr. Palmer were directed against parts of "Progressive Orthodoxy," not from his pen.

The reply made by the editors of "The Review" to this criticism insists that the issue of a future probation was not of their choosing, and that it was not their central thought.[1] They disclaimed any hostility to the idea of an essential Christ, and declared that their contention was with "the attempt to set up the theory of a 'potential' or 'essential Christ' in place of the actual redemptive work of Christianity, as the basis for the dogma of the universal decisiveness of this life."[2] This reply was less cogent to Mr. Palmer's criticism than to others less penetrative than his and failed to meet the objections he raised. From this time on, other issues came to the front and the theory of future probation gradually lapsed into comparative obscurity.

VII

The fires and incitements of controversy were the means of eliciting from Professor Smyth one of the most valuable services which he rendered, i.e., his explication of the true function and interpretation of creeds. This aspect of his defense, though now hardly more

[1] The reply is in the form of an editorial, vol. XIII, pp. 434–442.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 441.

than a memory, at the time made a deep impression because of its thoughtful and earnest presentation of a principle of creed interpretation until then but little recognized, namely, the *historical method of interpretation.* His "Defence" as presented to the Board of Visitors of Andover Seminary in December, 1886, is an extremely forceful document, unique in character and quality in the annals of American theology.[1] Its pertinence, astuteness, and weight made it a formidable factor in the trial. By means of a lucid history of the origin of the Andover Creed and the use of ample and convincing citations from previous usage, the defendant showed that the charges of heterodoxy made by his accusers were wholly without ground. That the Creed was, for its day, both concessive and progressive was certainly true. The fact made a strong argument against using it as an exclusive and restrictive instrument, and in urging it Dr. Smyth did much to clarify the whole controversy. But that part of the defense is of the most permanent value which takes up the nature of creed subscription as such. Having declared, "I accept the

[1] *The Andover Defence*, published by Cupples, Upham & Co., Boston, 1887.

Seminary Creed in its historical sense,"[1] he went on to state that he meant by this:

(1) That the language of the Creed must be interpreted historically. Its traditional terms, not otherwise explained, must have their traditional meaning. Whatever of strictness, whatever of liberality, belongs to them when thus understood, enures to the subscriber now as at the first.

(2) Whenever traditional language is departed from and new phraseology introduced, we are brought into special contact with the intention of the Founders.

(3) There is room for a progressive interpretation and systematization of the truths of the Creed. . . . Historical interpretation gives us first the Creed as it proves to be a living fountain for others who receive it.

(4) The truths of the Seminary Creed may be adjusted to a larger knowledge and life than were open to the framers. A historical study and interpretation of the Creed shows that these truths came to these men as living and fruitful principles, and it is of the very nature of such truths to find new application and service in new forms.[2]

Besides the recognition of these principles, the defendant asked the visitors to interpret the Creed "as a whole," "to admit the impossibility of making every article in its obligation complete in itself, or any phrase literally

[1] *The Andover Defence*, p. 162. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 171.

binding which is traditional and contradictory to what is new in the Creed and therefore controlling." [1]

Here, surely, is an original and vital conception of creed interpretation. Over against the customary habit of taking a creed literally, just as it stands, without reference to the aims of its framers or the conditions out of which it sprang, this contrasted point of view regards a creed not as something to be "held as an infant's hands hold, purposeless, whatso is placed therein," [2] nor yet "figuratively," but as "a summary of principles which are to be applied and developed from generation to generation." Whether or not one can fully concur in this interpretation of the Andover Creed, it may be granted that it throws light upon the nature of creeds and upon the reasonable understanding and use of them. Through such discussions as this it is becoming evident that, though creeds can never recover the dominant place they once had, they may not be treated as worthless.

There was nothing of fetishism or obscurantism in Professor Smyth's attitude toward

[1] *The Andover Defence*, p. 173.

[2] J. R. Lowell: *The Cathedral.*

dogma and creed, but rather a sane and reverent respect.

Men sneer at religious dogmas and rail at their authority, deny their possibility or rank them with things that perish. Many dogmas have become extinct. Others must go. Not all is genuine which wears the garb of orthodoxy. But a genuine Christian dogma is not simply a divine revelation; it is also the surest and grandest achievement of human reason. It is enduring as the Eternal Reason. It is the mind of Christ formed within the minds of those who have learned to think in his school and after Him. It has for us the authority of God, and at the same time it becomes the believer's personal conviction and assurance. A brilliant and fascinating preacher has said that creeds are like birds' nests. They give a place to rest; but, like birds' nests, they should be pulled down and built new every year. Too much occasion and justification have been given for such a saying. It suggests a caution, but it misses a fact. The Church has not wholly failed to realize its calling and prerogative in the domain of religious doctrine. Amid all that is variable in creed and theology, there are constant elements, truths and logical statements of truths, that abide through the centuries. The imperfection of the work should not blind us to the high valuing of the workmen. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows." "Ye are my friends." And this is the privilege of friends, to know the truth of God. "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto

you." There is a kind of depreciation of creed and dogma which is at bottom a depreciation of reason and liberty and Christianity. Sparrows produce no Brunelleschis nor Michael Angelos. They spread no spacious domes over myriads of worshipers in the succession of centuries. It is derogatory to human reason, as well as to the Christian Church and Christian science, to deny to it the power of building for all time. "I have ordained you that your fruit should remain." Birds' nests! If theologians are tomtits! It is derogatory, also, and hostile to Christianity. Through the centuries dogmatic statements have sprung from Christianity as naturally as trees from seeds. Christianity will doubtless continue to produce them to the end of time. The symbol of Judaism was circumcision. The symbol of Christianity is the Apostles' Creed,— Symbolum Apostolicum,— out of which has sprung, and will continue to grow, a theology centering in Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, the Eternal Word.[1]

VIII

The closing years of Professor Smyth's life after his virtual acquittal until the death, in 1904, of Mrs. Smyth, were serene and fruitful, — the more so, perhaps, for the storms through which he had passed. There was something deeply catholic and joyous in his nature and in his attitude toward life, in spite of the earnest conviction, in which he followed both Edwards

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. I, pp. 3, 4.

and Kant, that human nature is radically diseased by sin. In reviewing Allen's "Jonathan Edwards," he comments on Edwards' view of human life as follows:

> Man the sinner and man the creature were hopelessly confused. His responsibility filled the compass of thought, his fall and corruption darkened the whole natural horizon. No distinctly conscious thought appears of the larger and encompassing reality that man, though sinful, is still the child of God; that his history is an evolution; that his finiteness and weakness and need are as great as his sin; that there is a divine education of the race and of the individual as well as a moral probation; and that the Son of Man is the appointed Head of humanity in both relations. But if Edwards was here narrow in his view, it is not breadth simply to see the truth he failed to discover. Kant teaches as radical a doctrine of depravity as Edwards. The latter's fundamental postulate cannot be shaken,— the universality of sin. Jesus teaches that man's greatest need is not guidance but recovery, not truth but life.[1]

But when life has been renewed and illumined by Christ it becomes exceedingly large and attractive. So it appeared to this profound student of history as he pictures it in a forceful article which he published in "The Andover Review" in 1891, "The True Use of the World: Three Types of the Christian Life." In

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. XIII, p. 290.

this paper he presents a graphic view of the use of the world characteristic of the Greek, Latin and Protestant types of Christianity, as represented respectively by Macrina (sister of Basil the Great), St. Bernard, and Luther.[1] The conclusion is as follows:

> Therefore — so Luther would say, I doubt not, were he with us now — as Christian men and women, we must come right in and take possession of this earthly life in all its interests and possibilities, doing what we can, and all that we can, to redeem it from vanity and hopelessness, from lawlessness and selfishness, that the beautiful order of the heavens may be reflected in the yet more glorious order of a redeemed humanity, and of a world recovered to its divine uses; so that the restrictive precept, *Love not the world*, will be no longer needed because men will have learned in every station and relation of life to love their fellows, and all that concerns their well-being, even as God so loved the world as to give his only Son to die for it. The true use of the world is, not merely to rise above it, not chiefly to gain its discipline, but to save it.

In these mature and hopeful words is reflected the inner life of this noble Christian scholar, true conservative, yet — paradox though it be — true progressive, living in the world yet above it, and having in all things "the mind of Christ."

[1] *The Andover Review*, vol. XV, p. 510.

CHAPTER VI

WASHINGTON GLADDEN

WASHINGTON GLADDEN

1836. February 11. Birth at Pottsgrove, Pa.
1841–42. Spent a year with his grandparents at Bedlam, Mass.
1852. Apprenticed as printer in the office of *The Owego Gazette*, Owego, N.Y.
1856. Entered Williams College, graduating in 1859.
1860. Ordained as pastor of the First Congregational Methodist Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.
1860. December 5. Married Jennie Cohoon of Brooklyn, N.Y. (died 1909).
1861–66. Pastor of the Congregational Church, Morrisania, N.Y.
1863. Engaged in hospital work with the Army of the Potomac.
1865. Delivered Commencement poem "After the War" at Williamstown, Mass.
1866–71. Pastor of the Congregational Church, North Adams, Mass.
1871–75. Religious editor of *The New York Independent.*
1875–82. Pastor of the North Congregational Church, Springfield, Mass.
1878–81. Editor of *Sunday Afternoon.*
1881. Received degree of Doctor of Laws from University of Wisconsin; University of Notre Dame, 1905.
1882. Pastor of the First Congregational Church, Columbus, Ohio.
1882. Received degree of Doctor of Divinity from Roanoke College.
1889. Lyman Beecher lecturer, Yale University.
1893. Elected president of Illinois State University. Declined.
1893. Preacher to Harvard University.
1900–02. Served as member of City Council, Columbus, Ohio.
1902. Lyman Beecher lecturer, Yale University (second series).
1904. Moderator of the National Congregational Council, Des Moines, Ia.
1905. Addressed the annual meeting of the A. B. C. F. M. at Seattle, Wash., upon "Shall Ill-gotten Gains be sought for Christian Purposes?"
1917. Addressed the National Congregational Council at Columbus, Ohio.
1918. Death at his home in Columbus, Ohio, July 2.

CHAPTER VI

WASHINGTON GLADDEN AND THE SOCIAL THEOLOGY

Washington Gladden was a man whom the people of America, long before he finished his long career of service, learned to trust and love, for he gave them both conscience and cheer. It would be difficult to name one who did more to disseminate progressive religious and social ideas. He was typically, unqualifiedly, and devotedly American, a man of the people: "an average American," he called himself;[1] an ideal American, many would call him. He won his hearing honestly, by patience and persistence. Grandson of a village shoemaker and son of a country schoolmaster, he was brought up in an intelligent community of the then "West," though having an inheritance of the best of New England blood. Working in boyhood on a farm and apprenticed to a printer at the age of sixteen, he "earned his living" in true American fashion. Making his own way up

[1] *Recollections*, p. 1.

from the bottom, he was "self-made" in the best sense, but also home-made, American-made, Christianity-made. The name "Washington"— due to a family tradition that his great-grandfather served in Washington's body-guard — has been not unworthily borne by him. In several respects he was also Lincoln-like,— simple, courageous, trustworthy, straightforward. As a liberator and fashioner of religious thought in America, especially among those of his own Pilgrim lineage, he has done signal service.

I

Dr. Gladden was one of those Americans whose life, in the span it covered, in the changes it witnessed, in the compass and wealth of its achievement and the measure of its productiveness, fills one with admiration. In part this repleteness was due to the times in which he lived. The expansion and enrichment of this country, cultural as well as physical, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present, has been such that it would be difficult to match it with a period of equal duration in any age or land. The boy who read the Bible by the light of pine-knot and tallow dip, who began his education in the country school where each

scholar had a different text-book, who heard Jacob Knapp describe sinners thrust back into hell by devils with pitchforks, who trembled when the afternoon sunshine grew yellow with smoke, lest the end of the world was at hand, who saw the anti-slavery movement take root and the clouds of the Civil War gather and break, and roll away, who heard the first faint lispings of the evolution hypothesis and saw the stars of Tennyson and Browning rise, who witnessed labor organized, who looked on as electricity waved her magic wand over invention and industry, who hailed and heralded the New Theology, and who saw the peace movement wax and wane as the Great War darkened first over Europe and then over his own country — yet detected behind the shadow the radiance of a new and nobler world order — might well exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

The tale is told with zest, clarity, and vividness, and with a certain sense of wonder and gratitude, in his "Recollections" (1909). It was inevitable that Dr. Gladden should write this autobiography. To have failed to do so would have been disloyalty to his own nature and life-history. It is a book of genuine interest and permanent worth. It takes its place, in spite of his

disclaimer, among the spiritual romances of American biography. A sagacious observer and accurate chronicler, he carries the reader through the political, social, industrial, and religious events of his lifetime with true realism and yet with the interpreter's vision. His descriptions of the experiences connected with the Civil War are especially vivid, and his reflections upon it, as upon other events of his lifetime, full of a rich sagacity.

"Recollections" portrays a life whose interests and enterprises have been extraordinarily warm and varied and whose service has flowed out in many directions. Yet there is no difficulty in determining its main mission. Washington Gladden was an apostle — may we not say *the* apostle in this country? — of Applied Christianity. The phrase "Applied Christianity" is now as familiar as it was once strange,— due in large degree to the enterprise of this indefatigable exponent of it. How unfamiliar the phrase, and that for which it stands, was thirty years ago, is indicated by an incident which Dr. Gladden relates in connection with his use of it as the title of a proposed volume:

> To bring the reason and the conscience of the community, and especially of the Christian com-

munity, into close contact with this problem was a large part of my endeavor during the first years of my life in Columbus. In several Sunday evening addresses, more or less closely related to this theme, most of which were afterward printed in the "Century Magazine" and other periodicals, and which were finally included in a volume entitled "Applied Christianity," I sought to deal with this central question. The title of the volume indicates the gist of the discussions. I remember that when I submitted this volume to the publishers, Mr. Scudder, who was then the reader for the firm, hesitated over the title. He could not see the force of the adjective. I tried to show him that the whole significance of the book was in that adjective; that the thing which the world needed most was a direct application of the Christian law to the business of life. He accepted the explanation, and I fancy that whatever may have been the fate of the contents of the book, the title of it has served to call attention to an important fact.[1]

Since the publication of "Applied Christianity," in 1887, a great company of earnest men and women has devoted itself to the betterment of social and industrial conditions. The agencies and persons working to this end have been many and their points of view varied. The outstanding motive of the efforts of Gladden and of those who caught his ideal, has been *the emphasis placed upon Christianity*

[1] *Recollections*, p. 297.

as offering the only adequate motive and ideal. Social service has meant for them the application of Christianity.

Moreover, the Christianity to be applied was very clearly conceived by Dr. Gladden. Behind his social mission there has been from the first not only Christian motive, but a definite, tangible, clear-cut idea of what Christianity means. He has been theologian as well as reformer; his has been a distinctly theological Christianity — a Christianity buttressed, not burdened, with theology — and all his thinking has been conscientiously and avowedly allied with the New Theology. Of this theology as the true interpretation of Christianity he has been a tireless champion.

II

No man's theology can be understood apart from his personal history and experience. In the case of Dr. Gladden we possess an exceptionally clear and accurate account of these. As a loyal and devoted child of the Puritan tradition in which he was brought up, he endeavored, he tells us, to enter into life by the strait gate of the then accepted mode of conversion, which consisted of a realization of one's

lost and sinful estate and a full dedication of himself to God, to be followed by a joyous assurance of acceptance. With long and earnest effort he sought this experience,— but in vain.

I tried to do just what I was told to do. I was to "give myself away" in a serious and complete self-dedication. I suppose that I shall be far within the truth if I say that I tried to do that, a thousand times. But I understood that when I had done it, properly, I should have an immediate knowledge of the fact that it had been properly done; some evidence in my consciousness that could not be mistaken; that a light would break in, or a burden roll off, or that some other emotional or ecstatic experience would supervene; and when nothing of the kind occurred, the inevitable conclusion was that my effort had been fruitless; that I had failed to commend myself to the favor of God, and was still under his wrath and curse. It is not a good thing for any well-meaning soul to be left in that predicament. To feel that, in spite of your best endeavors, you are an alien and an outcast from the family of God is not encouraging to virtue; it tends to carelessness and irreverence. I have often wondered, in later years, that my faith did not give way; that I did not become an atheist. It was the memory of my father, and the consistent piety of my uncle, I suppose, which made that impossible. But that little unplastered room under the rafters in the old farmhouse, where I lay so many nights, when the house was still, looking out through the casement

upon the unpitying stars, has a story to tell of a soul in great perplexity and trouble because it could not find God.[1]

In spite of this lack, he united with the Presbyterian church and kept in dutiful attendance and observance of all his religious duties until he left his uncle's farm, which had been his home from his eighth year, to go to the neighboring village of Owego, N.Y., to learn the printer's trade. In this more independent life, he gradually dropped out of sympathy with the church. He was brought back by an evangelist "whose notion of Christian experience was simple and sensible" and who quickly cleared away his doubts and misunderstandings.[2] It is evident that he had been blindly reaching out after an ethical and practical Christianity. He found it at last in the Congregational church of Owego, formed by a company of persons who had withdrawn from the Presbyterian church and had called to its pulpit the pastor who had been dismissed from that church for the serious offense of praying in the pulpit for slaves. Released from his misconceptions and in this congenial atmosphere, Gladden threw himself into church work with heartiness and satis-

[1] *Recollections*, p. 35. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

faction. His mind began to turn toward the ministry as a vocation. Of this intention he writes:

> Such, then, was the soil in which my purpose to enter the ministry took root. It was not an individualistic pietism that appealed to me; it was a religion that laid hold upon life with both hands, and proposed, first and foremost, to realize the Kingdom of God in this world.[1]

Out of such a temperament and experience there might well issue either no theology at all, worth taking account of, or a theology that takes its rise in the ethical and rational instincts. Gladden was wise enough to realize that he needed a theology and that the way to it lay through the securing of a thorough, liberal education. Upon this pathway he speedily set out. His joy in the opening of the gates of literature and history is refreshing. Classical studies especially fascinated him. He prepared for Williams College, from which he graduated in 1859. Rather surprisingly, he stopped short of a theological course and after graduation entered at once upon the work of the ministry. Still he was not entirely bereft of theological instruction, for he had taken President Mark Hopkins' course

[1] *Recollections*, p. 63.

for the seniors in the Westminster Catechism, which he pronounces "a good equivalent for a seminary course in systematic theology."[1] His studies with Professor John Bascom, who greatly helped him, were also not unallied with theology.

III

Slowly and thoughtfully he worked out his own doctrinal beliefs, through the teaching of his deepening experience, the Bible, and his continuous and ever-enlarging reading. The authors by whom his mind was first set free and started on its own unfettered course were Frederick Robertson and Horace Bushnell. The latter's "God in Christ" aroused him to a larger and more vital conception of Christianity.[2] His first publication in the field of religion, the well-known little book "Being a Christian" (1876), reflects his own experience and has been a help to many passing through a similar experience.

The intellectual stimulus of his work and associations steadily strengthened and deepened his thinking. The early years of his ministry were great "growing years" and the growth

[1] *Recollections*, p. 73. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 119.

never stopped. The thoroughness and candor with which he faced the fundamental issues of religion — the existence of God, the possibility of knowing Him, the nature of Christ — appear in his first strictly theological volume, "Burning Questions" (1889). It consists of a series of lectures originally given to the students of Ohio State University in 1886. A report of these found its way into the "Christian World" of London and was afterwards published in book form in that city, and later in this country.

Several other volumes of a doctrinal character followed, the two best known being "How Much is Left of the Old Doctrines?" (1899) and "Present-Day Theology" (1913). "Not for the scholar but for the people" [1] are these, as are all his books. The former is a very clear and cogent though unpretentious examination of the leading Christian doctrines, showing not only that all that is truly vital and essential in each is "left," but that a great deal more of their true meaning and relation to life is understood than ever before. The force and skill with which Dr. Gladden succeeds in lopping off doctrinal deadwood — such as the doctrine of a personal devil, original

[1] Preface of *How Much is Left of the Old Doctrines?*

sin, the governmental theories of atonement, and others — is only equaled by the "efficient grace" with which he succeeds in proving that at the heart of the old doctrines is abiding truth that only needs reinterpretation in the light of enlarging knowledge. He is very adept also in showing the assistance which science and Biblical criticism afford in bringing out the larger spiritual values of fundamental doctrines.

The interest and assent with which these straightforward discussions of Christian doctrine, like those upon "Who Wrote the Bible?" were received indicated the need of just this kind of popular yet thorough and scholarly treatment. The same interest showed itself when, fifteen years later, he delivered his addresses "Present-Day Theology" to an audience filling his church on week-day evenings. It is no slight service to thus prove to a non-theological age that theology is still indispensable. Dr. Gladden's theology was frankly and fully a theology for to-day and to-morrow. He was as far as possible from being a "theological troglodyte"— to use a descriptive phrase of his — and yet he was never radical, destructive, or self-assertive.

A characteristic and strategic method of his is his large and free use of quotation from representative and reliable authorities on the subject discussed. "These are part of the argument, generally the best part," he puts it in one of his prefaces. No one could be wiser or more just in the use of this art. He presents his sifted and selected material in neither a servile nor a superior manner, but in such a way as to strengthen his argument; as if he would say: "You see, friends, these are not my views only; they are those of the best writers upon these subjects." The inference sank in. Where two or three witnessed together every word was established.

He was a tireless yet discerning reader. The success with which so busy a pastor and public servant kept pace with the most worth-while publications of the day, not only in theology but in sociology and in general literature, is almost incredible. One could determine for practical certainty what were the leading books influencing intelligent opinion at any given period by noting those to which Dr. Gladden made reference. If a man ever kept step with the progress of his generation it was he, and the number of laggards whom he pulled up into line

is legion. This habit continued as long as he could read and preach. His eighty-third year found him discussing in his pulpit, with a vigor which must have perpetually astonished his congregation, the truths and errors of H. G. Wells' conception of God, Josiah Royce's theory of interpretation, the merits and defects of Sir Oliver Lodge's investigation of the phenomena of spiritism, and other topics of the theological day.

The doctrines upon which Dr. Gladden laid chief stress are the Divine Presence and Fatherhood; human sonship — heredity he characterized as "God working in us," and environment, "God working round about us,"[1]—; Christ, "the ideal man, the consummation and the crown of humanity, and therefore the manifestation of God"[2]; Atonement, "the reconciliation through suffering of holiness with love"[3]; Grace as "help"[4]; repentance as "changing one's mind"[5]; the kingdom of God as "the whole social organism, so far as it is affected by Divine influences"[6]; the Church as "the

[1] *How Much is Left of the Old Doctrines?* p. 131.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 173. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 194. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 217.
[5] *Ruling Ideas of the Present Age*, p. 1.
[6] *The Church and the Kingdom*, p. 6.

central organ of the social organism"[1]; the Bible as the inspired, but not infallible, book of righteousness[2] made glorious by the "Divine Life shining out of the pages"[3]; the Life Everlasting a reasonable hope, based upon belief in the everlasting love.[4]

IV

Such was, in brief, Dr. Gladden's theology. New? Yes, to be sure, in the sense that truth newly discovered is ever fresh and fair,— but not novel. All that is novel about his theology was his determination that it should be applied, utilized, set to work to save not only individuals but society. This demand that Christianity save society was singularly new, but still more singular was it that it should be new. God being such as Christianity has always taught Him to be — our Father — why not make all our human relationships such as a righteous and loving Father requires? Brotherhood? Why not, then, live as brothers? Christ the Redeemer of men? Why not, then, let Him redeem all our deeds and relationships? Immortality? Why

[1] *The Church and the Kingdom*, p. 24.
[2] *Who Wrote the Bible?* p. 360.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 372.
[4] *Present-Day Theology*, p. 209.

not, then, begin to practice immortality and make our present life rich with its vast potentialities?[1] Such were his questions. It was straight and pointed reasoning, direct from the premises of Christianity to a plain conclusion. It had often been made before; but not quite in the way Dr. Gladden presented it. For he held a strangely painful heresy as to the direct relation between creed and deed.

Quite as clear as his theological exposition of Christianity and his principle that it must be applied, was his demonstration of the spirit and manner in which it should be applied. In those two admirable volumes "Tools and the Man" (1893) and "Ruling Ideas of the Present Age" (1895) — the former a course of lectures first delivered on the Lyman Beecher Foundation at Yale in 1889, and later at Mansfield College, Oxford, and Meadville Theological School, and the latter the Fletcher prize essay of Dartmouth College — this instigator of Applied Christianity opened a new door of duty and opportunity to American Christianity; or if it had already been opened he opened it wider and showed more of what lay within.

Starting with a summary statement of the

[1] *The Practice of Immortality* (1901).

chapters "The Labor Question," "The Collapse of Competition," "Coöperation the Logic of Christianity," "The Reorganization of Industry," and "Socialism" in "Tools and the Man"; and the chapters "The Sacred and the Secular," "Religion and Politics," and "One but Twain" in "Ruling Ideas of the Present Age."

V

Dr. Gladden's lifelong fellow-feeling for the laboring-man is well known. It goes back, he hints, to that sorrowful day when as a boy of eight he toiled in a rye-field all day and received at night the munificent wage of half-a-cent (a coin then in circulation). Perhaps this left, he adds in recounting the incident, "an incipient sensitiveness respecting the conduct of those 'who oppress the hireling in his wages.'"[1]

At all events, the rapidly festering labor problem which became acute in the eighties found in Dr. Gladden a wise and sympathetic diagnostician and physician. In the Ryder lectures, given in Steinway Hall, Chicago, in the winter of 1895–96, published under the title "Social Facts and Forces," he goes with considerable

[1] *Recollections*, p. 20.

detail into some of the factors of the labor problem. He discusses "The Factory," pleading for the reduction of hours of labor and scoring the iniquities of child labor; "The Labor Union," whose right to exist he defends with unanswerable logic; "The Corporation," "that gigantic immoral person," the dangers of whose "soulless" acts he exposes with keen discernment; "The Railway," whose predative robberies he ascribes to "the futile attempt to govern a business which is inevitably and properly a monopoly by the law of competition";[1] "The City," whose "inefficient" and "corrupt" government he deplores; and "The Church," which he charges with "the chief blame for the strife of classes and the social dislocation and divisions."[2]

Here is a series of indictments of appalling magnitude. Washington Gladden never minced matters. His courage was as imperial as his outspokenness was democratic. Yet he was singularly free from bitterness and pessimism. He painted dark things in their true color, without fear or favor, but he never failed to show how they came to be so black and how the murk could be removed and another color put on. He

[1] *Recollections*, p. 147. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 213.

did not "wait to strike until the iron should be hot; he heated it by striking," as he wrote of the men who overthrew the Tweed ring.[1]

VI

How far is this task of social regeneration committed to the church; how far to the pulpit? Dr. Gladden took a very positive position on this question:

To my own mind, the conclusive evidences of the truth of Christianity are found in the social movements of the world about me. I know that Christ is king of men, that his kingdom is the kingdom of the truth, because I see that he has laid down laws to which men must conform in every relation of life if they would be happy and prosperous and free. To make plain this truth to men, to show them that Christ is actually establishing his kingdom in this world, is one way — it seems to me a very effective way — of preaching Christ. Yet there are persons who will listen to such a presentation, and then lament that Christ is not preached. A man who had never seen any light save one feeble ray that came through a keyhole into the dungeon where he was confined might lament, if you took him out of doors at noonday, because you had deprived him of his vision of the light. So a man who knows nothing of Christ except the glimmering beams of his beauty that find their way through the cracks and orifices of some theological system may feel himself bereft

[1] *Recollections*, p. 200.

if you show him the Light of the world shining with noonday splendor all over the field of modern history. But men who are in the habit of living out of doors can hardly be expected to adjust their vision to the optical infirmities of theological troglodytes.[1]

This is clear and convincing as a general principle, but it left many difficulties unsolved. Many weak men made the pulpit a place for political bluster or buried it under sociological sawdust. Dr. Gladden, like many others, felt the need of a further utterance upon the subject. Consequently he made use, with care and thoroughness, of the opportunity of a second series of lectures on the Lyman Beecher Foundation, entitled "Social Salvation" (1902). The purpose of this course is thus stated in the Preface: "If Society were articulate, its cry would be, 'What must I do to be saved?' That is the social question which this volume tries to answer."

In dealing with the problem of the pulpit and the social message, in the first chapter, the lecturer displays the spirit of fairness and moderation with which he was accustomed to meet every issue. He selects two of the strongest possible critics of the social message, Dr. Robert Dale and J. Brierly, and allows them to state

[1] *Tools and the Man*, pp. 177, 178.

their case in their own words. After quoting the latter's statement, "When the minister has become merely political, it is because he has lost grip on religion," he continues. "That proposition ought to require no argument. The minister who has become merely or mainly political, or sociological, or scientific has abandoned his vocation. The minister to whom religion is not the central and culminating power in all his teaching has no right to any Christian pulpit." Having granted this, he goes on to say: "It is *the religion* of politics, of economics, of sociology that we are to teach, nothing else. We are to bring the truths and powers of the spiritual world, the eternal world, to bear upon all these themes. This is what we have to do with these social questions, and we have nothing else to do with them." [1]

VII

The fearlessness of Dr. Gladden in insisting that the application of ethical principles should begin at the house of God is well evidenced in his attack upon "tainted money." In this famous episode he invaded the sacred precincts of the oldest and most honored missionary

[1] *Social Salvation*, p. 26.

society in the country, which he revered and loved, and charged its chief officials with seeking the ill-gotten gains of "predatory wealth." Carrying the battle into the open and laying his case before the public, as well as before the American Board, he forced the conscience of the church and the nation to face the issue. Other men would have pressed the matter less urgently, more privately and quietly. That was not Washington Gladden's way. He always took the public into his confidence, with perfect naturalness and conscientiousness. Was not this a matter that concerned the honor of the whole family? Well, then, let the family consider it and rectify the wrong! Whatever may be said as to the ethics involved in this until-then-dormant issue, it must be said that Dr. Gladden conducted the prosecution in an admirable spirit. He was blunt, but not belligerent; persistent, but not personal.

His ethical crusades were singularly disinterested. If he lacked tact, he had something infinitely greater than tact — unbounded goodwill. Without hesitation or caution he struck at existing evil wherever it showed its head, even in the ranks of his friends and brethren; but his frankness and sincerity took the sting

out of his assaults. Did he win a verdict against the use of "tainted money"? Decision has not yet been handed down — either by the American Board or by the public. One fact emerges. Things have been different, measurably so at least, since. The money conscience is a little more sensitive. The "New Idolatry" of ancient mammon is not so obtrusive.

With all his downrightness — indeed, this is one indication of the fact — Dr. Gladden was a lover of men. He loved them singly, in their homes and in the church. How deep and unwearied was the pastoral instinct in him! fervent as that of the old-time family pastor and spiritual father. He loved men also in masses. He had faith in that caldron of good and evil, beauty and ugliness, the modern city. His own city was dear to him. He did much for its institutions, its government, its higher life. For two years he served on the City Council — where he was influential in securing a lower street-car fare and other civic improvements — furnishing an object lesson in civic fidelity to the whole nation. One of his volumes, "The Cosmopolis Club," is a study of the city.[1] It

[1] *The Cosmopolis Club* (1893). See also the chapter "The Redemption of the City," in the volume *Social Salvation*.

appeared first as a most timely and influential series of articles in "The Century Magazine." He was not afraid of being soiled by the filth of politics. He had a great respect for the sacredness and power of the ballot. "The powers that be" of to-day, he pointed out, are the voters. It is they who are ordained of God, and worthy of respect. By their means — if they would exercise their prerogative — he saw that government, both civic and national, could be purified. "To them all the power is committed. They are the sole depositories of the sovereignty. They are responsible, jointly and severally, for good government." [1]

VIII

These pressing concerns would seem to be enough for any one man to carry on his heart and his shoulders. Yet they did not exhaust his devotions. It was as impossible for him to remain cold to any great moral or spiritual enterprise of his day, or to keep out of any fight for truth and righteousness, as for Hercules to leave any of his labors unfulfilled.

Two great moral crusades which sprang up afresh in the later years of his life enlisted his

[1] *Ruling Ideas of the Present Age*, p. 176.

earnest support. One is that of church unity and the other that of world peace. Of the former he was an early and earnest advocate. At the very outset of his career he prepared for "The Century Magazine" a series of articles which attracted much attention and were afterward published as a book entitled "The Christian League of Connecticut" (1883). In this well-executed assault on denominationalism an imaginary group of Christian men and women in a New England town coöperate in paying the debt of one of the churches, instituting a Young Men's Club, handling the problem of pauperism, starting a free kindergarten, and other similar enterprises. It was something that never had been done, and yet something in itself so feasible and reasonable, and it was presented in so vivacious and attractive a way, that it captured the imagination of thousands. Some readers thought that it was a veritable history, and others resolved that it should be.

The league, togetherness, coöperation — that was a passion of Dr. Gladden's, whether it involved individuals, churches, states, or nations. When the Great War came, he saw that the nations had reached the "fork of the roads." What would be the outcome,— militarism or

internationalism? In the Church Union prize essay on peace, "The Fork of the Roads" (1916), Dr. Gladden sent out one of his clarion calls to the nation and the church in behalf of the Christian law of coöperation. It is a vigorous appeal for national brotherhood. As ever with him, the Christian motive is at the front. "If anything is central in Christianity, it is the obliteration of the lines of division between races and nationalities, and the inclusion of the world in one brotherhood. Whatever other truths might be made subordinate or secondary, this truth of the Divine Fatherhood and the human brotherhood is to be lifted into the light and held before the thought of the world."[1] When our nation, after long hesitation, declared war, he sought to have it keep the same high aims and ideals as the lodestar of the struggle.

When one considers the number of forward-looking enterprises and coöperations in which he engaged, each clearly grasped and loyally maintained, he wonders at the kindred flames that burned so high and so long in this catholic and ardent mind. He wonders, too, at the sleepless zest of this man in his watch-tower, scanning every horizon for signs portentous of the

[1] *Ruling Ideas of the Present Age*, p. 124.

uprisings of evil and for indications of the coming of the kingdom. Yet his watch-tower has not been for observation simply. As soon as he noted well what action was most needed he descended to the field and took a yeoman's part. Very strategic, too, as well as prophetic, was his warfare, as is indicated in his wise saying in connection with his editorials in "The Independent" in condemnation of the Tweed Ring, "It is often well to assume that what ought to be will be." [1]

There was a remarkable timeliness in all of his knight errantries. When the young man of modern training, alienated from the church by a hidebound theology, was searching for a larger faith, Dr. Gladden was one of the first and wisest to come to his aid. When the laboring-man was struggling for his share of life and liberty in the face of an indifferent or hostile church, it was this large-minded pastor who took his place at his side. When the honest citizen of limited powers was despairing of ever seeing his city rescued from the political mire in which it was wallowing, he heard this voice of good cheer bidding him take his spade and follow him in. When there was no one to rebuke

[1] *Recollections*, p. 206.

the encroachments of mammon upon the sacred precincts of the church, it was he who stood forth to do it, fearless and alone. As emblematic of the man as if it were his motto is his revision of the familiar saying, so as to read, "What is everybody's business must be my business." [1]

IX

All of these tasks were performed *con amore*. He came as near putting his arms around the whole of America as a man well can. Yet he could detach them, too, to become one of the "knights of the long arms" [2] to battle for the causes and the people he loved.

He could be severe, also, with those whom he loved, as we have already discovered. More than once he rebuked the churches with ringing words, as in the annual sermon before the Congregational Home Missionary Society in 1905, when he said: "The church has so far forgotten its essential character that it has lost no small measure of its power. Its alliance is mainly with the prosperous. Its hopes are centered upon the strong and the influential." [3] In keeping with this was his New Year message for 1918:

[1] *Ruling Ideas*, p. 208.
[2] *Tools and the Man*, p. 276.
[3] *The New Idolatry*, p. 148.

If after the war the church keeps on with the same old religion, there will be the same old hell on earth that religious leaders have been preparing for centuries, the full fruit of which we are gathering now. The Church must cease to sanction those principles of militaristic and atheistic nationalism by which the rulers of the earth have so long kept the world at war. We must not wait till after war. That may be too late. Is not now the accepted time?[1]

Beside these warning notes should be placed these more hopeful words in his chapter "October Sunshine":

I am far enough from thinking that the church is perfect, or from imagining that all the work of the Kingdom is done by the church. But the church has been, and in increasing measure will be, the vitalizing and inspiring agency in the social movement. Unless the ideas and forces which the church stands for are at the heart of this movement, it will come to naught; and it will not come to naught. There is no place in which a man can get nearer to the heart of that movement than in the Christian pulpit. It is sometimes supposed to be a narrow place, but, as a rule, it is as wide as the man who stands in it chooses to make it. And I know of no other position in which a man has so many chances to serve the community; in which he is brought into such close and helpful relations with so many kinds of people. The field of the church, under the right kind of leadership, is as wide as the world, and the force of the church is more responsive to-day than

[1] *The Pacific*, January 17, 1918.

ever before to the right kind of leadership. There are, it is true, too many churches which are sponges rather than springs of influence, — which devote their energies to building themselves up out of the community instead of pouring themselves into the community in streams of service; which have not learned that it is as true of churches as of men, that they who would save their lives lose them. But it is quite possible for a brave and warm-hearted leader to put a new spirit into such a church as this, and a conversion of that sort makes joy among the angels.[1]

Those who knew and loved Dr. Gladden in his later years must have been struck by his tenderness,— the kind of tenderness that blossoms on the sturdy stock of strength. It showed itself in his voice, in his bearing, in all the gracious atmosphere of his autumnal years. There was a great reverence in him which came out in his ripe yet vigorous age. Radical — or rather, one should say, progressive — as he remained in his viewpoint, whenever a question came up concerning doctrine or the Bible (so say his parishioners), he always sweetened his liberalism with a deeply reverent spirit. Free and fearless as he was, he was no iconoclast. Like

[1] *Recollections*, pp. 420, 421.

his Master, the bruised reed he would not break, nor quench the smoking flax.

Not unallied with this tenderness was an appreciation of beauty which was his from youth, but which grew with the years, making him a lover of poetry and of all noble literature and prompting him to express himself in well-knit verse as well as in telling prose,— lest there should be one avenue of self-expression closed, one garden of his soul uncultured, one of his ten talents that he failed to use. His literary output has been prolific. He began to write for a local paper almost as soon as he had learned to set type. He was a frequent contributor to periodicals all his life. For four years, 1871–75, he was religious editor of "The Independent," and left it only for conscience' sake.[1] At least thirty-eight volumes besides numerous periodical contributions — none of them mediocre — have come from his fertile mind.

His books are, to be sure, not treatises but tracts,— tracts for the people, but tracts of the highest excellence, no *ephemera*, but as serious and full of appeal, in their way, as Newman's or Milton's. Through them, as well as by means

[1] See *Recollections*, chap. XVI.

of pulpit and platform, he became a trusted and widely known teacher of the people.

The grace and power of his work as a preacher are best illustrated in two outstanding volumes of sermons, "Where Does the Day Begin?" and his last ripe, wise, winsome volume, "The Interpreter." Though not the possessor of a conspicuous style, he made himself master of pure, terse, compact, and forceful English. There is not an ambiguous, involved, or insincere sentence in anything he has written. Nothing is here to puzzle or confuse, — as nothing to regret or extenuate.

Hidden, though by no means negligible, in this luxuriant leafage is his one volume of poetry, "Ultima Veritas." In this the bright particular star is that immortal hymn, long ago discovered and adopted by the Christian consciousness and now illuminating every modern hymn-book worthy of the name, "Oh, Master, let me walk with thee." This hymn, first published in "Sunday Afternoon," was written under the sense of loneliness caused by the author's theological isolation. It is a heretic's hymn — a "heretic of yesterday" and a saint of to-day.

Is the latter too exalted a title to fit this

rugged, every-day man, companionable servant of righteousness and teacher of the people? Not if sainthood means devotion to God and man, the holiness of a life dedicated to great ends. Such a saint, vigorous in intellect, progressive in thought, fearless in spirit, strong in action, reverent and tender as a child, apostle of Applied Christianity, America may well be proud to add to her calendar,— a saint after the order of the Pilgrim fathers.

XI

The large part which Dr. Gladden had in fashioning what is coming to be termed the "Social Theology" makes it desirable to present in closing this chapter a brief survey of the rise of this theology and of his relation to it.

If one looks for the factors that have entered into the development of the Christian social consciousness in this country in the last twenty-five years, he will have to take into account many conspiring causes, such as the English "Christian Socialism" of Maurice and Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, the German socialism of Karl Marx and Lasalle, the growth of the democratic ideal and the progress of the historical study of the Bible — bringing out, as it has, the

social ideal of the prophets in the Old Testament and the social meaning of the Kingdom of God in the New Testament. Stimulated by such influences and incentives as these there sprang up in this country in the last quarter of last century, in sympathy with — one might almost say *about* — Washington Gladden, a company of Christian thinkers and leaders, including such men as Josiah Strong, Edward Everett Hale, Francis G. Peabody, William J. Tucker, William D. Hyde, Henry C. King, Charles R. Brown, Graham Taylor, Charles R. Henderson, Shailer Mathews, George Hodges, and Walter Rauschenbusch, who bent their energies to the defining and propagating of social Christianity.

How vital a part Washington Gladden played in this movement is indicated by the following words of Professor Rauschenbusch in his "Christianizing the Social Order" [1]: "I want to pay the tribute of honor to three men who were pioneers of Christian social thought in America twenty-five years ago,— Washington Gladden, Josiah Strong, and Richard T. Ely. These men had matured their thought when the rest of us were young men and they had a spirit

[1] Page 9.

in them which kindled and compelled us." Of this entire group of men, Gladden was the one who from the very first laid greatest stress upon the theological side of the movement. His emphasis upon the part played by theological ideas seems almost extravagant. In "Ruling Ideas of the Present Age," [1] he writes:

> The belief in the Divine Fatherhood has undermined feudalism and destroyed slavery and led in democracy. The power of this great idea it is, more than any or all other agencies, which has compelled the emancipation of the laboring classes, and the establishment in so many nations of political equality.

Divine Fatherhood, human brotherhood — these, as taught by Jesus, were to Dr. Gladden the two great inseparable truths upon which the social gospel rests. Very simple theology is this, but theology nevertheless. Into the psychological and metaphysical implications of these doctrines he did not go far, but he was well aware, as we have seen, that not only they but their great Teacher himself have metaphysical implications which should be followed out in order to get a complete and well-grounded philosophy of Christianity. Nevertheless the simple truths themselves are, as he saw, the essential dynam-

[1] Page 33.

ics of Social Christianity. "Ideas," Dr. Gladden terms these dynamic truths, and such they are. Yet they are also far more and greater than ideas. Behind their nature as *idea* lies their potency as *consciousness*, experience. Ideas of this sort could not come into existence except through a greater reality beneath them, requiring intellectual apprehension and interpretation. The study of this underlying social consciousness, psychologically and metaphysically, involves a deep probing of the very roots of our being. It takes us inevitably into the realm of personality, human and divine, where we have to face the problem — with which in its practical aspect Dr. Gladden dealt so wisely — of the nature of society, including the relation of the individual person to other persons. In this realm it is becoming clearer that — as he pointed out — the individual person is not to be set over against society, as if their nature and interests conflicted. Rather does each involve the other as the very condition of its existence.

XII

Out of this deepening social consciousness there have emerged a Social Gospel and a Social Theology. The Social Theology is not so much

a new set of doctrines as a new emphasis and a deeper interpretation of original Christian doctrines — such as the Divine Fatherhood, human brotherhood, incarnation, sin, atonement — in the light of an intensified social consciousness.

The movement into the social theology may be made from either of two points of approach. The first is that which, as it relates to the individual, the Greek theology seized,— the kinship of God and man, leading to a quickened realization of the Divine Life in social relations. The other is that which governed the Latin theology,— the alienation of man from God, or the fact of sin, the consciousness which leads to the penitential return of man to the right, and the recovery of righteousness in his dealings with his fellows. Both of these truths are implicit in Jesus' individual-social message, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." *Repent.* Why? Because the kingdom is at hand; because the Ideal Life, individual and social, is imminent. Here are both incentives. Yet theology finds it difficult to hold the two in just balance. One or the other is apt to take precedence in the construction of a theology. With Washington Gladden, as also with Francis G. Peabody,[1]

[1] See *Jesus Christ and the Social Question.*

Henry C. King,[1] and most others of the American school of Social Christianity, the *ictus* has fallen upon the kinship of God with men as taught by Christ, the presence of the ideal in the human soul, the conviction that society itself is instituted by God and will respond to the appeal of the social idea. On the other hand, the approach from the consciousness of sin, from the manifest prevalence of injustice and iniquity in human relations and the consequent need of social redemption, is that which that great and noble prophet of a new social order, Professor Rauschenbusch, adopted in his very searching and significant volume "A Theology for the Social Gospel."[2]

Reflection shows that both of these complementary truths are urgently needed in a social theology, as in an individual theology. Out of our consciousness of the Divine and of the ties that bind us to one another flow those realizations of Divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood which, as they arouse faith and hope and love, work mighty changes in the social order; and out of the consciousness of sin and social

[1] See *Theology and the Social Consciousness.*

[2] An admirable tribute to the memory of Dr. Rauschenbusch has been published by the Rochester Theological Seminary (*Rochester Theological Seminary Bulletin*, November, 1918).

injustice comes the conviction of wrong-doing, producing a repentance which leads to the correction of social abuses and the establishment of a new and better social order.

The social theology works for the purification and reconstruction of theology as a whole. In the deepened sense of social solidarity, the artificial, unhuman, merely formal doctrines fade — sovereignty, decrees, election, static revelation, substitutionary atonement, salvation as escape from punishment, special providence; while the great humanizing doctrines — Fatherhood, brotherhood, racial solidarity, incarnation, love—suffering, universal providence, the kingdom of God — stand out in nobler outline and assume a more vital meaning. Theology moves into a deeper as well as a broader interpretation of "the life of God in the soul of man," when man is understood in the light not only of his individual but of his social nature.

CHAPTER VII

NEWMAN SMYTH AND LATER REPRESENTATIVES OF THEOLOGICAL PROGRESS

NEWMAN SMYTH

1843. June 25. Birth at Brunswick, Me.
1859. Entered Bowdoin College, graduating in 1863.
1864. Enlisted in 16th Maine Volunteers.
1865. Entered Andover Theological Seminary, graduating in 1867.
1867. Pastor of Mission Chapel, Providence, R.I.
1868. Ordained to the Congregational Ministry.
1870–75. Pastor of the First Congregational Church, Bangor, Me.
1871. June 20. Married Anna M. Ayer of Bangor, Me.
1876–82. Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Quincy, Ill.
1881. Received degree of Doctor of Divinity from New York University.
1882–1907. Pastor of the First Congregational Church, New Haven, Conn.
1895. Received degree of Doctor of Divinity from Yale University.
1899. Fellow of Yale University.
1908. Became Pastor Emeritus of the First Congregational Church, New Haven.
1913. Nathanael W. Taylor lecturer, Yale University.
1914. Chairman of a deputation which visited Non-Anglican Churches of Great Britain in the interest of a World Conference of Christian Faith and Order.
1915–. Member of the Commission of Comity, Federation, and Unity, National Council Congregational Churches.

CHAPTER VII

NEWMAN SMYTH AND LATER REPRESENTATIVES OF THEOLOGICAL PROGRESS

Closely associated with the Andover leaders, and sharing their cause as if one of them, was a theologian author and preacher who, having seen the Andover controversy through, has continued to exercise large influence in the expansion of religious thought both in this country and in England,— Newman Smyth. Although, being a younger brother of Egbert C. Smyth, he enjoyed the same scholarly and spiritual environment, he found his entrance into the problems of theology and his place of service by a somewhat different pathway. A brief narrative of the progress of his thought and experience as he has generously given it to the writer, at his request, follows in his own words:[1]

I

Early in my college life I arrived at the problems of modern philosophy. Without such adequate instruction as is now given in academic courses, I

[1] Written under date of March 6, 1918.

read for myself and became, perhaps, a premature philosopher. Consequently I soon found myself foundering beyond my depth. I began with Scottish philosophy, reading the Lectures of Sir William Hamilton, and becoming familiar with the theories of knowledge of Stewart and Reid. I was intent on finding what is real. Indeed one of my earliest recollections as a boy is that I was lying one day under a tree, watching the great white clouds passing across the sky, and wondering what there could be if after all there was nothing. I think this desire to seek and to find reality never has left me. Then I met with Hamilton's theory of the relativity of knowledge, his essay on the "Unconditioned," and found myself resisting it, but utterly unable to escape from it. In the senior year an important part of the regular course of studies carried me into Paley's "Evidences," and, most important, to Butler's "Analogy." The former opened the way for me into the scientific studies which I have been interested in ever since; but the study of Butler's "Analogy" was for me a formative and permanent influence. It became to me a unifying method of thought to be followed in all directions so far as possible. It seemed to reach down towards the fundamental principles, the final reality which I would know. I recovered enough from Hamilton and Mansel's religious application of his view of the Unconditioned, to write as my graduating essay something on the ambitious title of the Absolute. I regret that I have lost that early contribution to philosophy, as I wonder how wise or otherwise it might seem now; but I remember that it held fast to the reality of knowledge. At the same time Darwinism was in the early stage of

its controversy with a theology that comprehended it not; and Herbert Spencer's "First Principles" led me somewhat further towards the Ultimate Reality, and then left it as the unknown.

From these college studies and philosophical beginnings I soon passed into service in the army. There one stood face to face with realities. Men showed what they really were. I think my year of service in the army was one of the best years of preparation for my ministry,— and of theological preparation for it. It formed the habit of thinking in contact with the realities of life. I came to doubt any thinking that was not thought out in the midst of men, in daily and close contact with human life. It was probably this instinct that made me adverse to accepting any academic chair, and choosing, although seemingly contrary to natural professorial tendencies, to decline offers in which I might have had more opportunity for leisurely and scholarly pursuit of the philosophical and theological inquiries for which I had a natural inclination. Notwithstanding these advantages I preferred to think my thought out in the pastorate. I suppose I had come instinctively to feel that only by being compelled by my daily work to keep in contact with the human, could I come into touch with Reality.

I graduated from the army into the Theological Seminary. It was certainly a sudden transition from Appomattox Court House, where I heard the last guns fired by the Army of the Potomac, to a student's room in Andover Seminary. The two teachers of influence then were Professor Park in theology and Professor Phelps in homiletics. To the latter I owe much. His lectures, whatever their subject, were

always a lesson in literary style. It was a pleasure to listen to his perfect use of English. No student could come from his class room without despising a meretricious or cheap use of language for the sake of popularizing the truth. His lectures were a course in English literature as well as in homiletics, and while the sermon was to him always a vital thing, it was well that he made it so clear to his classes, by his own mastery of style as well as his instructions, that to be a good sermon even for common people it need not be an imperfect literary composition or offensive to good taste. The cheapness of condescension and adoption of vulgarities of speech, which are sometimes regarded as necessary to popular effect, were to him worthy of pointed sarcasm. His own sermons, which I listened to when a boy at Phillips Academy and later, had a quickening and spiritual interest which I have remembered gratefully through the years.

Professor Park was generally regarded as a great public orator, and it was customary to consider a sermon from him as an event. But less and less did his influence over my thinking prevail. His lectures were like an exercise in theological gymnastics, and never dull. But very soon, among a few of us, his dialectics aroused a spirit of criticism. He was master of dialectical skill not only in presenting his own propositions, but also in quick and often apparently crushing reply when we ventured objections. One of his favorite methods with us was to maintain that we agreed with him but did not know how to express ourselves. He seemed to me at times to resemble one of the Greek sophists; but we were not sufficient adepts in the Socratic method to put him

to confusion. Nevertheless our reason was less and less satisfied with his method of reasoning. It seemed to us that he shaped Edwards to conform to his system of New England theology rather than leading us to understand Edwards' thought. We often thought that he first insinuated his conclusion into his definitions and then with triumphant logic deduced them from them. To those of the class, however, who were satisfied with being sent out equipped with a complete system of theology and Biblical proof-texts, for which a net had been dragged through the whole Bible, his lectures were all that could be desired and they had furnished them a system of theology from which sermons could be drawn without any too anxious thought for the morrow on which they should have to preach. It seemed to be Professor Park's ambition to become the final exponent of the New England theology. As a formal system it may almost be said that he did finish it; and it was buried with him. His lectures have never been published, his life of Edwards upon which he was said to have been engaged was never written; and the pupils who once went forth as his favorite disciples have now almost all been gathered to the fathers. But Edwards' intellectual honesty, his profound searching for truth abides in our theological schools.

I suppose that it was my early and instinctive longing to know what is real that led me at first to criticise and then to abandon Professor Park's complete system of theological definitions and reasonings. As a consequence I found myself going back to Augustine in his searching of truth and to Plato in his ultimate ideas. The mystics attracted

me, and Neo-Platonism opened interesting though disappointing inquiries. But the prevalent New England theology, although in many of its fundamental ideas appearing to me to be valid, as a whole seemed to me (especially as taught by Professor Park) to be an orthodox rationalism; and rationalism of any kind did not satisfy me. My brother's lectures on the Ante-Nicene development of the doctrine of Christ, led me into a truer conception of the possible development of theology — a growing, living, expanding development — which has since then become more scientifically apprehended in my own thinking.

After preaching for two years in a mission chapel in Providence, R.I., declining offers for permanent settlement, I went to Europe and spent a winter in Germany for the sake of a period of further study and reconsideration of my theological preparation. I count it as one of the marked points in my theological education when Professor Tholuck called my attention to a small volume of lectures by a German scholar on "Biblical Theology." I had never before heard of any such title or method of investigation throughout my proof-text period of education and revolt at Andover. I had been taught how New England theology, versus the Princeton theology, was regarded by the prophets and apostles. I had heard nothing of Biblical theology. It opened to me a new lead, which I hastened to follow. The guideposts along the way were then marked by German signs, and for a few years my theological education had to be entrusted to German scholarship and leadership. Now, one need not go abroad to find out what critical Biblical studies and Biblical theology may mean.

On my return, taking up my ministry in the new light and with the restored assurance of faith, which had come to me from these further studies, and especially from the lectures and tutelage of Professor Dorner, I wrote my first book on "Religious Feeling." It was the first attempt to formulate what from childhood had been my instinctive desire and later my dominating conviction: that in some way we are in touch with realities. A similar attempt in the same direction was made in an article, published in "The New Englander," on what I called "The Dynamic Theory of the Intuitions." Then followed my book on "Old Faiths in New Light." Biblical criticism has advanced far beyond the beginnings which were then available to me; but the volume looked for the reassurance of faith in that direction. It would need to be re-written to bring it up to the present advanced state of Biblical and historical knowledge, and I have preferred consequently to let it go out of print.

At the time when it was published there were many among the younger students of divinity, both in this country and in England, who, like myself, had found no resting place for their faith in the current scholastic teachings of the theological schools then generally prevalent, who however had not had the opportunity given to me to feel the reinvigorating breath of the new time already beginning. Among the most grateful recollections of the years that are past, are letters of appreciation for that volume which I received from many who have said that it came to them at a crisis in their own religious development, who since then have become able thinkers and leaders in the reconstruction of Chris-

tian teaching in freer and fruitful adaptations to the knowledge and the needs of the present age.

After this the same thirst for the real led me away somewhat from the field of theological studies in the endeavor to find what could be known, how near towards ultimates we might come through scientific researches. The early fruits of these inquiries in what has now become the voluminous department of physiological psychology, were then accessible and a better understanding of Darwinism was becoming prevalent in Christian apologetics. These recent investigations and every advance of science towards the origin of things, every ascertained fact far out on the border line between the known and the unknown, had for me a fascinating attraction, as indeed pursuit of spiritual truth in this direction has been to me since — much more than dogmatic theology — my chief study and delight. But in this way one cannot make haste. Faith must follow the *will to know*. Enough that from what is known it may follow fearlessly whatever advance science may make into the unknown.

The point where a conflict between conflicting forces comes to an issue may be quite accidental. The fact that they meet and that the new tendencies of thought or life contend for the mastery is the important event. Such a conflict, threatening with division the Congregational church, arose in the Andover issue and the conduct of the American Board. It was entirely accidental so far as at the beginning my own responsibility for the initiation of it was concerned. Without previous intimation or desire, I found myself chosen by the Andover Trustees to the chair of theology which Professor Park

had left vacant. Nothing could have been more foreign to my own purpose or expectation. The controversy which arose over it centered upon a point which to my own thinking was quite secondary and merely incidental in its presentation by me. I had been challenged by a club of unbelievers, and in response had invited them to hear me speak concerning some of our chief Christian doctrines. They constituted the audience primarily to whom a series of sermons was addressed, taken down by a stenographer and subsequently published under the title, "The Orthodox Theology of To-day."

The action of the Andover Trustees had met, so far as I am aware, with no opposition until it so happened that Dr. Alden, a Secretary of the American Board, having been led by some inscrutable providence to read such a book as mine, had his attention arrested and fixed upon a passage of some two pages, in which I had suggested the possibility of some redemptive grace for those after death who had never known Jesus Christ in their earthly life. Together with Professor Park, he and some others made that a decisive issue between the old orthodoxy and the oncoming new thought. "The Congregationalist" opposed the confirmation by the Visitors of the Trustees' election.

The passage thus lifted into a controversial issue was not a doctrinal position, put by myself in systematic relations with an exposition of dogmatic teaching; it was an incidental suggestion offered as a possible answer to objections of a company of unbelievers. As such, whether justifiable or not, it should have been weighed as matter belonging to Christian apologetics rather than as a doctrine in

a system of beliefs. No science can advance without preliminary working theories, which later may or may not become part of accepted scientific determinations. To deny to theology the same liberty of inquiry and advance would be to take from it the very life of the Spirit of truth. At this time my own mind was preoccupied with questions that were much more fundamental and far-reaching. The whole field of critical and Biblical investigation had then been opened for scholarly research; I was looking forward to the questions which would need restatement in that direction. Moreover, the philosophical and scientific conceptions and assumptions underlying the received theology were being shaken or swept away. The work of constructive theology seemed to me to lie open, inviting Christian thinkers and leaders in that field, and the laborers were then few.

The controversy which had thus incidentally and accidentally arisen, so far as I was concerned, soon developed into a wider issue, and became a conflict for the liberty of young men especially who had applied for missionary service under the American Board, and indeed for the right of some of our most approved missionaries, such as Mr. Robert Hume, to continue in their Christian devotion. Behold how little matter was enough to kindle so great a fire — but there was enough dry timber and dead wood in theology then to make a great conflagration. In this controversy for liberty of thought I took deep interest and did my part. But the conception of the possibilities of grace after death I was quite content to leave to take care of itself in the field of religious thought. The Andover professors, themselves tak-

ing up the cause of liberty of thought, did whatever was necessary to set that possibility in the light of a Christian conception of God and His grace through Christ.

The larger inquiry, so far as the New England theology was concerned, which seemed to me to be necessary for the adaptation of Christian theology to the knowledge and thought of the coming day, I endeavored to present in an article published by me shortly after the question of my Andover election was settled, in "The Princeton Review" for May, 1882. It was entitled "Orthodox Rationalism." No mention was made in it of the subordinate controversial question concerning future probation. But I took issue with the entire method, philosophical and religious, underlying the theological systems, from confinement within whose dogmatic definitions I had happily escaped with my faith. It was my only answer to all the attacks which my own efforts had brought down upon me; and it was constructive in its aim, and as I then believed conservative of the very vitalities and spiritual power of the faith of the Church. Upon re-reading it, after the passage of all these years, I would subscribe to it, perhaps more than to any one thing which I have written of the method and spirit and essential vitality of my faith and lifelong search after the realities human and divine of this universe in which our day here on earth is spent. Later efforts have served to deepen, to enlarge, to render more dynamic the principles then stated. I have learned to appreciate and to value more what I now call Scientific Spirituality.[1]

[1] See the last lecture of *Constructive Natural Theology*.

Of late years my studies have led me to appreciate the need of a more scientific and constructive natural theology as a condition and means for further reconstruction of dogmatic theology. My later books have consequently been devoted to this task. The older New England theology made at least this contribution to religious thought; it demanded systematic construction of the existing material of knowledge and faith. Edwards was a great constructor of the materials given to his thought and he was a lifelong searcher after truth as his observations from time to time written down on scattered pieces of paper show. In his treatise also on the "Spiritual Affections" a principle of vitalizing power may be felt, which has never been lost even in the logical system-building of New England theologians.

II

The article to which Dr. Smyth refers is a luminous exposition of the New Theology and stands beside the Introduction of "The Freedom of Faith" and the Introduction of "Progressive Orthodoxy" as one of the best statements of the purpose and methods of the movement.[1] It opens with the same pertinent contrast between Lessing and Schleiermacher already employed by his brother and emphasizes, though in an entirely independent manner, the

[1] See also "The Old Theology and the New," by William Adams Brown, *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. IX, no. 1.

superiority of intuition to reliance upon mere reason,— the latter being the method which, with telling effect, is shown to be that of orthodoxy as certainly as that of skepticism. The appeal away from a barren rationalism is, however, not to a one-sided mysticism but to an apprehension of spiritual truth on the part of the *whole man* as contrasted with an exclusive dependence upon the intellect. This requires a new *psychological* method, one which recognizes that "man is a spiritual unity, one living whole, to be known and understood in relation to the totality of his environment." [1] This is Bushnell's contention, and Munger's as well, reasserted and amplified. Such a method calls, also, for the full recognition of the law of *development.* "We need for Christian theology a psychology which shall be true to the actual processes of man's life, which shall seek to understand consciousness, not by verbal dissection of it, but by following its living development." [2]

The knowledge of God gained thus is not that of a God whose existence is proved by the rationalizing intellect. "A God proved by us would be a God made by us." "God must first

[1] "Orthodox Rationalism," *The Princeton Review* (May, 1882), p. 296. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 299.

lay hold of us before we can lay hold of him." [1] Such a God is apprehended not by any one faculty but by the whole man, in an exercise of faith. "Unbelief is inclined to regard faith as a certain relation of mind to Christian ideas rather than as a relation of the whole man through the person of Christ to the whole God." [2] Christianity is defined as "love entering into the life of the world and redeeming it from its own undoing." "The incarnation is the final and perfect relation of the whole God to the whole universe." [3]

The true method in theology is further described, in this article, as "dynamical rather than statical." "It seeks to interpret results in mind and history by following with patient investigation the processes of life through which they have come to be what they are." [4] It is also "thoroughly ethical." "Being thus dynamical and ethical, it must also be in the truest sense spiritual." [5] Theology, that is, springs from life, the life of faith. "Faith is the true life manifesting itself, and bearing witness that it is true, in the life of man." [6]

[1] *The Princeton Review* (May, 1882), p. 299.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 304. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 308. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 309.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 311. [6] *Ibid.*, p. 312.

III

The principles and methods thus laid down have been consistently followed in all of Dr. Smyth's publications, of which the best known are "Old Faiths in New Light" (1879) and "The Orthodox Theology of To-day" (1881). The intuitional character of his thought is embodied in his first volume, "The Religious Feeling" (1877), in his volume of sermons "The Reality of Faith" (1884), opening as it does with the sermon "Faith a Preparation for Sight," and in a later volume, "Personal Creeds" (1890). It is significant to find him, in the statement above, going back, as did Egbert Smyth, to the intuitional and affectional element in Jonathan Edwards as the most essential and attractive factor in his theology. Similar emphasis upon intuition and experience characterizes most of the New Theology leaders from Bushnell on, as we have found. The ethical emphasis appears throughout his work and is brought to a focus in "Christian Ethics" (1892), a volume in the International Theological Library which has long taken rank as one of the leading works on the subject. Thoroughness, insight, balance, and wide acquaintance

with the literature of the subject characterize this treatise. It is surprising that amid the duties of a large parish so ample and careful a discussion of this difficult subject could have been prepared.

The psychological aspects and implications of theology are discussed with great thoroughness in the volume "The Meaning of Personal Life" (1916). Here emerges again the concentration of interest upon personality that characterizes the New Theology school. Great progress has been made in the last twenty years in the study both of psychology and of personality, but the gulf left between the two has been wide. No volume has so far succeeded in bridging it as this. Dr. Smyth is hampered by no theological inhibitions. He has made himself intimately acquainted with the problems not only of psychology but of physiology as they bear upon the question of the origin and nature of personal life. It is therefore with no theologically cramped hand that he traces "the natural history of personality from the behavior of lowest organisms along the lines of life's struggle and ascent up to the self-conscious conduct of man." Nor is it by mere predisposition that he finds "an energy active in every moment of our

consciousness, and known most intimately and ultimately in the exercise of our will, which nevertheless eludes definition, yet abides as indestructible reality and affirmation of ourselves." [1]

No chapter in the volume is more contributive than that upon "Personal Identity." In it the relation of personality to nature is thus discerningly described:

> Herein appears the unique marvel of personality; it becomes conscious of itself as individual and it individualizes its world; it is the one discovering itself among the many. In the midst of uniformities of nature moving at will on the plane of natural necessities, weaving the pattern of its ideas through the warp of natural laws, runs the personal life. On the same plane and amid these uniformities, yet itself a sphere of being of another order; in it, yet disentangled from it, and having its center in itself, it lives and moves and has its being, breaking no thread of nature's weaving, subject to its own law and manifesting a dynamic of its own.[2]

Analyzing the nature of personal individuality, the author finds in it these distinctive elements: (1) "It asserts its worth to itself," (2) it possesses "conscious solitariness of personal being," (3) it manifests "incalculability," (4) it "evinces

[1] *The Meaning of Personal Life*, p. 168.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 173.

its unique character by its selective formation of its own proper environment," (5) it exhibits "increase of psychical energy in personal life." Man, the incomprehensible yet interpretative interloper in nature, "is become actor and spectator of his own life, the final judge of all things from which he came forth, himself nature at her best, yet holding himself the heir of a realm of higher worth." [1]

Thus distinctly and unqualifiedly Dr. Smyth recognizes the duality as well as the unity of existence, constituted as it is of both nature and spirit. "We have then, directly confronting us, the dualism between the physiological system and the psychical constant in the unity of personal life." [2] The relation between them he regards as that of interaction. They are not in essential conflict but capable of true harmony. The nature of both matter and spirit "may admit of *sympathetic rapport* or effective adaptations to each other that we cannot clearly apprehend, but which we recognize as actual in experience." [3] Upon this intimacy, implying unity, he dwells with especial earnestness: "Not the denial of evolution but unbelief in the

[1] *The Meaning of Personal Life*, p. 191.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 116. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

unity of the natural and the spiritual is the vitiating falsehood alike of science and of faith. It were indeed a betrayal of personality to doubt the existence of either in the reality of the whole. Let either vanish and the other goes."[1] This is both true discrimination and true catholicity. In this direction and this alone, apparently, lies the real understanding of the intrinsic character and true development of personality in its relation to and use of the environment in which it wins its way to autonomy. In delineating the rise and progress of the personal life, he attempts to trace only the natural factors, leaving the spiritual almost untouched, but he at least recognizes that both concur in the process.[2]

IV

It is well that emphasis was thus laid by Dr. Smyth upon the physical and psychical concomitants of personality. It was desirable that a mind thoroughly grounded in metaphysical and theological science should make full rec-

[1] *The Meaning of Personal Life*, p. 192.

[2] See my *Personality and the Christian Ideal*, chap. XIV, and "The Pathway of Personality," *The Interpreter*, October, 1912, for an attempt to trace the rise and growth of personality on the ethical and spiritual side.

ognition of the empirical factors involved in personality and hence in religion. While not himself a scientist — possessing as he did the discursive rather than the concentrative mind — it may be doubted if any American theologian has entered so sympathetically and fully into the scientific spirit and point of view as has Newman Smyth. It has been a peculiarly needed and timely service. While the artificial "conflict" between science and theology has long since been recognized as having no roots in reality, there is still an unhappy lack of full *rapport* between the two complementary pursuits of truth. This being the case it was fortunate that a man so thoroughly grounded in philosophy and theology should take pains to understand the scientific viewpoint and enter sympathetically into it. He was one of the first to catch the significance of the science of biology to the spiritual order. His chivalrous apprenticeship in a biological laboratory, at an age when most theologians settle down into dogmatic ruts, is an evidence that it is not so much theology that produces dogmaticians as dogmaticians who produce theology. Here is as fine a piece of vicarious at-one-ment as any science can exhibit in its relation to other sciences. The

fruit of this laboratory work and of his wide and careful scientific reading and reflection is evidenced in three volumes of distinctive worth: "The Place of Death in Evolution" (1897), "Through Science to Faith," and "Constructive Natural Theology." The second of these volumes constituted the Lowell lectures of 1902 and the third the Nathanael W. Taylor lectures of the year 1913.

V

"The Place of Death in Evolution" presents an hypothesis which, whatever place may have been accorded it by scientists, offers a suggestive contribution to teleology. It is that death appears in the light of evolution not as an enemy but as an ally of life, disposing of outworn organisms in order that they may be replaced with others more numerous and more highly developed. Death works — as the thesis is restated by him in a later volume — "for the further differentiation and enrichment of life. Subsequently and obviously throughout evolution death balances the book of account between life's ratio of fertility and its means of living. We owe our human birth to death. We are the living children of a world that has died for us.

If, then, we may win from nature any assurance that death itself has its place as a servant in the work of life, that it has its reason for being here in a principle of utility, we may then conceive that death may also be discharged from service when no longer useful; that death may be atrophied in the highest embodiment of spiritual personality." [1]

"Through Science to Faith" is one of the best spiritual interpretations of evolution that has appeared and admirably supplements the irenic influence of Joseph LeConte's "Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought" (1887). The discussion includes such themes as "Evolution as Revelation," "The Fact of Direction in Nature," "Moral Character of Direction in Nature," "Retrogression in Evolution and Man's Fall," "Restoration in Evolution," and "The Prophetic Value of Unfinished Nature" — all treated with originality and insight.

The Taylor lectures, "Constructive Natural Theology," form a brief but very stimulating volume. The title is much too heavy, if not too broad, for the contents, which consist of illuminating comments upon the mutual relations and services of the scientific mind and the

[1] *Constructive Natural Theology*, p. 20.

spiritual mind. After the complete discomfiture of the earlier presuppositions and methods of "Natural Theology" it is doubtful if this term — so closely wedded with the erection of reason into a substitute for revelation — can be rescued for the further use of modern theology. Yet, however it be christened, Dr. Smyth has drawn the outline of a new natural theology, reborn into both the spirit of science and the spirit of Christ. The especial value of the discussion lies in its interpretation of the spiritual values of science to the religious mind. These values are strikingly summarized in the final chapter, entitled "Scientific Spirituality." The chapter opens with a discerning contrast of the scientific and mystical temperaments and habits. After drawing the contrast between them, the lecturer points out how the two "coexist and cowork in one's thinking and living, however they may be dissected in our analysis of consciousness." [1] Not only do they coexist and cowork but they supplement each other. "To be true alike to the natural and the spiritual is to keep to the end our personal integrity; nothing less is perfect simplicity." [2] This conclusion is followed by a description of the service

[1] *Constructive Natural Theology*, p. 111. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 111.

which the *scientific type* of religious experience — for Dr. Smyth claims that the scientific spirit is a form of religion — can render to "other recognized varieties of religious experience." This it does in imparting "a unifying sense of life," in guarding against the "partialness and exclusiveness" of other types of religious experience, in promoting "naturalness" and "unworldliness" — the latter in the sense of unselfishness — "and in renewing our faith in man's survival value." The characterization is open to criticism, as lacking in close discrimination as well as in completeness, but it is exceedingly suggestive; and no one could have done it on the whole so well as this sympathetic and synthetic student of both theology and science.

VI

This rapid survey of Newman Smyth's contribution to religious thought indicates but partially how penetrative and varied his service has been. So quick and sensitive is his mind to the opening of new fields of theological expansion that he has seen and made use of opportunity of advance where others saw only threatened disaster and retrenchment. His readiness

in seizing and occupying these new fields might have exposed him to the charge of being a theological opportunist; but a more careful judgment shows how unjustifiable such a judgment would be. His has been, rather, the alertness of one whose devotion to his cause gives him the courage and sagacity to preëmpt at once new territory in behalf of the higher life and its Lord.

This prescience of mind, rather than any shifting of interest or activity, explains the earnestness with which he has given himself of late years to a spiritual enterprise where the fields are white to the harvest and the laborers few,— church unity. Here he has selected a line of action, by no means easy, which he has made almost uniquely his own,— that of bringing together the New England aristocratic ecclesiastical democracy, Congregationalism, and the Southern democratic aristocracy, Episcopalianism,— realizing that if these two can be harmonized, much will follow. He has suffered many repulses and much misunderstanding in this crusade, but with a charity and persistence and skill worthy of a great cause he has pressed his purpose untiringly and not without effect upon the future of church unity. Underlying

this endeavor in behalf of church unity there is evident the mental and spiritual urgency and zeal of a true catholicity, the patient devotion of one whose sense of the value of continuity in organized spiritual life will not permit him to take easily the perpetuation of the spirit of schism which has for four hundred years divided Western Christendom. This appears in his striking volume "Passing Protestantism and Coming Catholicism" (1908), in which, while he overestimates the influence of Modernism, he succeeds in making clear the possibilities of the approach toward one another of the two great Christian bodies,— provided they were as disinterested as he would have them to be.

The tireless and intelligent devotion to the reunion of the church which has animated Newman Smyth in his later years reveals anew the outstanding trait which has characterized his entire life and thought, *the union of the synthetic and constructive spirit with the free and forward-reaching spirit.* Such a union, as rich as it is rare, has made of him a tireless awakener and leader in theological advance — undaunted and undeterred — with "the rays of morn on his white shield of expectation."

VII

With so large a company of forward-looking minds in the ranks of the Pilgrim heritage co-operating in constructing a freer and larger theology, it is impossible to include all in this study. For the sake of completeness it would have been desirable to present a number of other progressive thinkers, to a few of whom only I will briefly refer in bringing this survey to a conclusion.

One of the most outstanding of the builders of the newer religious thought in America, to whose work some allusion at least should be made, is that intrepid herald and clarifier of the new viewpoint, Dr. Lyman Abbott. The story of his service, in season and out of season, for the cause of advancing thought has been graphically told in his "Reminiscences" (1915). His mission — a vital and valuable one — has been, above that of any other American writer perhaps, that of interpreter, popularizer (in the best sense), and promulgator of the newer theology. For this he has shown rare gifts and the most indefatigable zeal. His unusual tutelage in the law, journalism, and the pulpit has given him a singular clarity of thought and of expres-

sion and a consequently wide hearing. From his earlier volumes upon the Bible and upon evolution to his "Letters to Unknown Friends" and his "Knoll Papers" in "The Outlook" he has been a helper of the perplexed and has cleared the pathway of difficulties for thousands of unsettled minds.

Associated with Dr. Abbott on the staff of "The Outlook" have been such rare progressives as Hamilton W. Mabie, Amory H. Bradford, and James M. Whiton. Of Mr. Mabie's discerning literary criticism, theological enlightenment was a notable accompaniment. Dr. Bradford, through his pulpit, his books, and his wide personal influence, exercised a large and liberalizing effect upon religious thought. Dr. Whiton, ever since the publication of his arresting volume "The Gospel of the Resurrection" (1881), has been one of the recognized leaders of freer religious thinking. He has directed his thought in later years more particularly to the cosmical and biological aspects of theology, and in the chapters contributed by him to the volume of theological essays which he edited, entitled "Getting Together" (1913), he has made suggestive studies in the interpretation of the divine immanence. In his

little volume "The Life of God in the Life of His World" (1918) he has supplemented his earlier elucidating discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity, "Gloria Patri," with a vitalizing interpretation of the same doctrine in the light of biology. Another of the most intrepid and clear-visioned leaders of advancing religious thought was President William DeWitt Hyde (d. 1917) too early withdrawn—author of books of stirring quality in ethical and social theology.

Other contributors to an expanding theology are James M. Campbell, author of "The Indwelling Christ," "Paul the Mystic," and other books of unusual spiritual insight; Albert J. Lyman (d. 1915), author of "Preaching in the New Age," and shining exponent of the same; Charles A. Dinsmore, whose "Atonement in Literature and Life" is an original and valuable contribution to the subject; E. Ellsworth Shumaker, author of "God and Man"; Clarence A. Beckwith, author of "Realities of Christian Theology"; Charles E. Jefferson, vigorous exponent of a conservatively liberal theology through pulpit and press; William F. Badè, author of "The Old Testament in the Light of To-day"; Eugene W. Lyman, author of "Theology and Human Problems" and "The Expe-

rience of God in Modern Life"; Herbert A. Youtz, author of "The Enlarging Conception of God"; and S. P. Cadman, author of "Charles Darwin and Other English Thinkers."

VIII

Besides the theologians already referred to and beyond the boundaries of the direct Pilgrim heritage, a complete account of the progress of American theology would require a survey of the work of Elisha Mulford, author of those wide-visioned volumes "The Republic of God" and "The Nation"; of A. V. G. Allen, to whose invaluable work reference has been made; of Henry S. Nash, a thinker and writer of rare suggestiveness; of that profoundly thoughtful theologian, William P. Du Bose; of Paul Micou, the publication of whose lectures at the Theological Seminary in Virginia, "Basic Ideas of Religion" (1916), formed a marked contribution to theological literature; and of that resourceful and radiating author Dean George Hodges, — these among the Episcopalians.[1] Among the Presbyterians who have con-

[1] One feels like apologizing for attaching these denominational labels; it is a concession to the passing order, for the sake of location.

tributed to theological advance one would need to include that unflinching and successful leader of "New School" Presbyterianism, Albert Barnes; also Henry B. Smith, Charles Cuthbert Hall, and later William Adams Brown and Henry Van Dyke, whose "Gospel for an Age of Doubt" has fulfilled a large mediating service. Among the Baptists who have led the way into a broader theology have been Francis Wayland and Ezekiel G. Robinson, in the earlier days, and Presidents Harper and Faunce, Henry C. Mabie and Harry E. Fosdick in later years. The Methodists of the vanguard include the late Milton S. Terry, W. F. Tillett, W. W. Guth, Bishops Henry M. Du Bose and F. J. McConnell. The Disciples body has from its inception stood for a simplified theology, but its earlier doctrinal positions, though earnest and vital, were of a limited nature, and it is only within recent years that some of its leaders, including Peter Ainslee, H. L. Willett, Edward S. Ames, Charles C. Morrison, editor of "The Christian Century," have come to have a conception of the true meaning of theological progress.

The writings of Swedenborg, as interpreted in America by the Worcesters and others and

by "The New Church Review," have exercised, somewhat subtly, a liberalizing and spiritualizing influence, at first aided but now hampered by the allegorical doctrine of Scripture. As for Unitarianism, the story of its emancipating though sometimes disintegrating work has been well rehearsed by its own historians and panegyrists. "No body of like size," Leonard W. Bacon has said, "was ever so resplendent with talents and accomplishments." [1] It has at times diverted but on the whole advanced as advanced religious thought in America.

While the Quaker doctrine of the Inner Light does not seem to have been regarded as intended to lead forward into new truth, it offered an early asylum in this country, as in England, for those who could not endure the shackles of Calvinism, and Quakerism has given us the practical mystic John Woolman, the poet-theologian Whittier, and in late years has produced two fruitful leaders in religious thought, George A. Barton and Rufus M. Jones.[2]

The New Thought-Christian Science movement has, in a way, promoted theological ad-

[1] See L. W. Bacon's *History of American Christianity*, p. 387.

[2] See especially the latter's *Social Law in the Spiritual World* (1904) and *Studies in Mystical Religion* (1909).

vance by substituting a mystical attitude toward truth for the older rationalizing and dogmatic attitude, but it has within it no adequate intellectual understanding of the truths it presents and no conception whatever of the meaning of progress in religious truth.

IX

It is greatly to the advantage of theological progress in this country that the chief American religious encyclopedias, McClintock and Strong's "Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature" (1867) and the Schaff-Herzog "Encyclopedia" based on the "Real-Encyclopedia" of Hauck and edited by Philip Schaff (1882, revised 1889), have on the whole stood for modern scholarship. The revised edition of the latter (1905) under the able editorship of S. M. Jackson, assisted by Charles Colebrook Sherman and George W. Gilmore, is in accord with well-established advance along Biblical and theological lines and has helped to give American theology self-confidence and to keep it in touch with that of Europe. It is not to be overlooked, too, that the religious dictionaries of which British theological scholarship has so good a right to be proud, especially Dr. Hast-

ings' "Dictionary of Religion and Ethics," have a good proportion of articles by Americans. Nor should account fail to be made of the enterprise and breadth of outlook of American ecclesiastical scholarship evidenced in the fact of the appearance as well as the character of the "Catholic Encyclopedia" (New York, 1907). When a church begins to make encyclopedias it will find itself borne forward by the very procession which it has joined.

The American religious periodical press, too, has been steadily advancing in breadth and ability. While "The Independent" and "The Outlook" (formerly "The Christian Union") were distinctively religious organs, they did an incalculable service in promoting fresh religious thought, and even now an occasional editorial or article on a religious theme gives tone to their varied and picturesque pages. Their defection, if it be such, from the field of distinctively religious journalism is, however, more than atoned for by the increasingly broad and intelligent discussion of religious problems by such periodicals as "The Nation" and "The New Republic." The old-line denominational papers are becoming broader in their scope and outlook, though with less genuine interest in

theology, and their editors and contributors look across the lowering fences with no little of friendly appreciation of what is going on in other fields.

X

The theological schools, as collective custodians and dispensers of theology, have some of them already entered incidentally into our purview of theological progress. It remains to add a few further words concerning those which have contributed most to theological progress, through that coöperative service which accomplishes much.

If Andover Seminary played a large part in theological advance in America, Yale Divinity School (founded in 1822), in a less conspicuous and controversial fashion, performed a hardly less important service. Unhampered, in the main, by suspicion and attack, Yale theologians have worked constructively and effectively to reconcile "old faiths and doctrine new" in the interest of a genuine advance. Samuel Harris made a contribution to the philosophy of theism so careful, so catholic, and so progressive as to raise the whole body of American theology to a higher level. The notable work of his colleague, George P. Fisher, embraced not only his

scholarly and widely circulated histories of the church and of Christian doctrine but such liberating volumes as "The Grounds of Theistic and Christian Belief" (1883) and "Nature and Revelation" (1890). Dr. Fisher's work in church history has been carried forward by his successor, Williston Walker, with a breadth and accuracy of judgment that have made his contributions to the subject an informing and irenic influence among all bodies of Christians. In the field of Christology, George B. Stevens, whose early death in 1906 was a great loss to the School, left a work of scholarly progressivism in his "The Christian Doctrine of Salvation" (1905).[1]

[1] New Testament study at New Haven has been given a liberalizing character by Professors Frank C. Porter and Benjamin W. Bacon. The latter's brilliant and untiring work in criticism has been supplemented by a volume of unusual acumen and value in the interpretation of Christianity, *Christianity Old and New* (Earl Lectures, 1911). The present Dean of Yale School of Religion, Charles R. Brown, brought from his magnetic pulpit in Oakland, California, a power of clear thought which has crystallized in a group of books which have done much to further moderately progressive Christian thinking, especially among young men. Of these volumes, *The Main Points* carries an unusual measure of clarity, sanity, and force into the statement of the cardinal Christian doctrines. In the University Faculty, Charles F. Kent's Biblical textbooks have been the harbingers of a larger outlook to thousands of students. Charles C. Torrey's studies are contributing much to the advance of critical scholarship.

Oberlin College, "a cutting from Lane Seminary," was from the first a leading force in exorcising certain of the abnormalities of Calvinism and has continued to nourish a vital spiritual type of Christian thinking and living.[1] No theologian of to-day in the Pilgrim succession has done more for the genuine progress of theology than President Henry Churchill King. When his "Reconstruction in Theology" appeared in 1901, it at once summarized and stimulated theological advance and the volumes which have followed, especially "Theology and the Social Consciousness" (1902), have held theology to its high calling and done much to adjust it more intimately to the best thought of the time.[2] In this work Dr. King has been finely sustained and furthered by Edward I. Bosworth and other members of the Oberlin faculty. Other seminaries, founded by the descendants of the Pilgrims, Bangor, Hartford, Chicago, Pacific, and Atlanta, while in their

[1] For a survey of Oberlin theology see F. H. Foster's *History of New England Theology*.

[2] President King has had the great advantage of approaching theology from the chair of Philosophy. Like Hermann Lotze, whose *Microcosmus* he long used as a textbook in his classes, he has taught a philosophy and a theology in which natural science and psychology have had large emphasis. Personality also occupies a leading place in his writings.

earlier history in the main conservative, have had upon their faculties men of independent and progressive views.[1]

Union Seminary (founded in 1835), released from the fetters of denominational control though constantly subjected to charges of heresy, has vied with Andover and Yale in furthering, in its own way, the progress of theology. Its faculty has stood for the finest achievements in advancing scholarship. Henry B. Smith was one of the pioneers of the Christocentric theology in America, although, as Foster has shown, he did not break with the New England theology.[2] In Biblical and historical scholarship, the well-known names of Briggs, Brown, and McGiffert are representative of the best and sanest advance. In the field of apologetics the late George W. Knox was a proven leader, as was also President Charles Cuthbert Hall. In systematic theology no present writer is accom-

[1] See Professor C. M. Clark's *History of Bangor Seminary* (1915); *Recent Christian Progress, Studies in Christian Thought and Work During the Last Seventy-five Years in Celebration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Hartford Seminary* (1909); *Religious Progress on the Pacific Slope, Addresses and Papers at the Semi-Centennial Anniversary of Pacific School of Religion* (1916). Atlanta Seminary founded in 1901, is proving a source of liberating religious thought in the South. Pacific Seminary, now Pacific School of Religion, has become undenominational.

[2] *History of New England Theology*, p. 435.

plishing more constructive and permanent work than William Adams Brown, whose strong, wise, and winning textbook "Christian Theology in Outline" (1906) has, like William Newton Clarke's irenic "Outline of Christian Theology" (1894), been the guide of many minds in the transition from the older to the newer point of view.

A school of theology of the German Reformed Church, which took its rise in Mercersburg, Pa., about 1836, accomplished an important service for theological progress through that group of exceptionally able and progressive men, F. A. Rauch, John W. Nevin, and Philip Schaff.[1]

To rehearse the service in behalf of theological progress of Harvard Divinity School (established in 1815), next to Andover Seminary the oldest of American theological schools and for a long time Andover's theological foe, would require a chapter, or rather volume, by itself. At first and for some time a partisan and distrusted institution, it gradually steadied into unbiased and effective leadership, numbering at different periods among its influential teach-

[1] See "Mercersburg Theology" in the Schaff-Herzog Cyclopedia.

ers Frederick Hedge, Ephraim Peabody, Charles Carroll Everett, one of our most profound contributors to Theism, Joseph Henry Thayer, the brilliant and chivalric soldier-scholar, Crawford H. Toy, Francis G. Peabody, who by his sane and vital interpretation of the social nature of Christianity has made all denominations of American Christians his debtors, Dean W. W. Fenn, James Hardy Ropes, and the Moores — George F. Moore, whose work in the Old Testament and in the history of religion forms one of the notable contributions to American scholarship,[1] and Edward C. Moore, who, like Charles Cuthbert Hall, has presented an exceptionally broad view of Christianity as the missionary faith [2] and who in his little volume "Protestant Thought since Kant" has etched the progress of modern philosophy and theology with a rarely skilled hand. Professor W. E. Hocking, of the Harvard Philosophical Department, in his "The Meaning of God in Human Experience" has made an original and stimulating

[1] Dr. Moore's *History of Religions* — a history of theologies as well as religions — incomparable in wealth and scope, has been followed by a volume treating of Mohammedanism, Judaism, and Christianity.

[2] See, e.g., "The Liberal Movement and Missions," *American Journal of Theology*, vol. XVII, p. 22.

contribution to philosophical theology on the same high level as that of Professor Royce.[1]

"The New World," published under the auspices of the Harvard Divinity School from 1892 to 1900, carried on the spirit and work of "The Andover Review." Its successor, "The Harvard Theological Review," has reached a still higher level in breadth of outlook, thorough scholarship and productive theological thought. American theology has cause for gratitude in the establishment (1912) of another review, not associated with any institution, of unique value and world-wide service, "The Constructive Quarterly" (New York),— edited by Mr. Silas McBee — undoubtedly the most inclusive representative of all sections of the Christian church ever published, able, judicious, progressive.[2]

XI

Other schools of theology have taken vital part in furthering and making intelligible the modern viewpoint, notably the Divinity School

[1] A later volume, *Human Nature and its Remaking* (1918), helps still further to bridge the gap between psychological and philosophical and theological thought.

[2] For some years past, *The Homiletic Review* (New York) has been increasingly broad and inclusive in its viewpoint.

of Chicago University,[1] Rochester Theological Seminary,[2] Boston University School of Theology,[3] and the Episcopal Theological School of Massachusetts.[4] The Divinity School of Chicago University, started so auspiciously on its mission by President Harper, through its publications as well as its instruction, is accomplishing an exceptionally extensive liberalizing and

[1] See especially George B. Foster's radical *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, Ernest De Witt Burton's *Biblical Ideas of Atonement* (with J. M. P. Smith and G. B. Smith), Shailer Mathews' *The Church and the Changing Order* and *The Gospel and the Modern Man*, Shirley J. Case's *The Evolution of Early Christianity*, J. M. P. Smith's *Social Idealism and the Changing Order*, Edward S. Ames' *Psychology of Religious Experience*, and *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion*, edited by Gerald B. Smith. A careful critical review of this last important volume, by Professor William Adams Brown, may be found in the *American Journal of Theology*, July, 1918.

[2] While President Augustus H. Strong has been by no means a progressive, he has broadened and enriched Baptist theology. Professor Rauschenbusch was a world leader in social theology. Other members of the Rochester Faculty have contributed to theological advance.

[3] H. G. Mitchell by his *Ethics of the Old Testament* and other volumes won the condemnation of the Methodist bishops. Henry C. Sheldon's *System of Christian Doctrine* is a great advance over the systems of Wiley and Watson, and Borden P. Bowne was the bearer of Methodism's most advanced standard. Professor Olin S. Curtis, of Drew Seminary, in his *The Christian Faith*, has produced a work largely imbued with the modern spirit, especially in its emphasis upon personality.

[4] Professors A. V. G. Allen and H. S. Nash, already alluded to, were members of the faculty of this school, and the lamented Dr. George Hodges since 1894 was its Dean.

educating work. Its two virile periodicals, the broad and scholarly "American Journal of Theology" and the vigorous and incisive "Biblical World," are doing a work of education and advance that is too well founded to be resisted and that has no aim but the furtherance of truth.[1]

It is evident from this incomplete enumeration of untrammeled and forward-looking Protestant theologians and theological institutions of yesterday and to-day that American theology is moving forward as well as outward, with a freedom and an impetus that promise much for the future. It is true that there is more of promulgating than of probing. There is a dearth of original and productive thinking upon the larger problems of theology. But the way lies open and the incentives increase constantly. Hospitality to voices from all quarters — not to say eagerness to listen — was never so great as now. This fact is encouraging for the future, — toward which we turn in concluding with a hopefulness begotten on the road we have traversed.

[1] Criticism may be offered, however, of the confinement of the Chicago School to the historical method in theology, thus limiting both its intellectual and spiritual range.

CHAPTER VIII

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NOTHING is more characteristic of the present period of American theology, as contrasted with the past, than the calm which has fallen upon it after three centuries of conflict and controversy. The question cannot but arise whether it is the calm of death or of life, of shallowness or of depth, of stagnation or of movement.

I

From its inception theology has been a storm-tossed science, largely because its issues have been so close to human hopes and fears. American theology has had its full share of upheaval and tempest. Storm after storm has risen "dark o'er its way." The first invasion of heterodoxy that troubled the New England faith was that of Arminianism, against which Jonathan Edwards hurled all the thunderbolts of his dramatic and forceful genius. Then came, in

rapid succession, Liberalism, Universalism, Unitarianism, Denominationalism, followed by the New Theology, Biblical Criticism, Evolution, Progressivism.

The period of denominational controversy in which the leading denominations were pitted against each other, running through the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century, was followed by a period of intra-denominational controversy in which many of the leading Christian bodies were rent by internecine theological conflict. This period passed without causing much permanent schism although the fires still smolder in some of the more conservative camps.[1]

The conflict between the conservative and progressive wings in the Pilgrim heritage, which has been described, has been paralleled, with differing phases, in all the leading Christian bodies. In almost every case the progressive cause, while tempered and restrained by conservative resistance, has made distinct and permanent headway. Not seldom, it is true, the newer viewpoint has been presented in a

[1] The divisions upon the slavery issue were primarily political but were given a doctrinal color, also, by appeal to creedal as well as scriptural standards.

spirit and with a method so negative and cynical that it has carried no religious values and has alienated many whose chief concern is for such values. But this controversial and critical spirit is giving place to one that is more reverent, considerate, and constructive.

In this theological advance the leadership has passed not so much *away* from the original Pilgrim lineage as *into* the larger fellowship which has grown up about it. American theology is increasingly becoming that which theology as a science must be in order to be true to itself, — *interdenominational*, or rather *undenominational*, unsectarian, devoted to truth for its own sake and not to the furthering of the interests of any particular sect or denomination. This outcome is happily fulfilling the prediction with which I. A. Dorner closed his "History of Protestant Theology." After referring to the disruption of parties — by which he meant denominations — in America, as standing in the way of theological advance, he concluded as follows:

> But the more a feeling for theological science increases and with it that power of reasoning in which a unifying power is inherent because its aim is the universally and absolutely true, the more will many of the existing denominations necessarily disappear, and others enter upon such a process of mutual

understanding as will secure a common history of their intellectual and religious life, which, like that of Great Britain, may vie, on equal terms and with fruitful results with German theology.[1]

II

The removal of the incubus of sectarianism from theology gives it an unlimited field for progress. If only it could come to be recognized universally among Christians that *progress is the true and normal life of theology*, much might be hoped for. Progress does not mean that spiritual truth is shifting and unstable, continually changing its nature. Unhappily this is the notion of theological progress which prevails among conservatives, and it is against this — and rightly — that they raise their protest. But progress means something very different from fluctuation, or the renunciation of convictions once firmly and clearly grasped. To abandon a conviction once formed is one thing; to reinterpret and enlarge it is another. Progress means, not the former, but the latter. It means the recognition of the law of development — whose counterpart in the sphere of nature is evolution — as of the very nature of the spiritual life.

[1] *History of Protestant Theology*, vol. II, p. 501.

True development is never a destructive but always a *conserving* process. It holds fast and carries forward all the real gains of experience and reflection — tested, purified, refined, related — and out of them constructs further and larger gains. Nor does the principle of development in spiritual truth disturb its character as *revelation*. It simply recognizes the *method* of revelation as continuous, accretionary, cumulative, and thus at once saves theology from the curse of becoming static and makes revelation a far more vital and normal reality.

So far, then, from testifying to its weakness, the movement to transcend its past shows that theology has its greatest glory, its very life, in its power of advance. No sooner does a theology win the title "new" than it must needs yield to a newer. Thus it was with the "New Divinity" of Jonathan Edwards and his followers, with the novelties of the New Haven theology, the new departure of Edwards Park, with the "New Theology" of Munger and Gordon and the Andover faculty and thus it is coming to be with the newest theology of our day. It would be a reflection upon theology, upon truth, upon God, if it were not so. This ceaseless movement, in the light of the principle of development,

means no mere shifting of ground but actual advance, however slow and indirect. Such plausible judgments of the nature of theological changes as that which reduces them all to mere "winds of doctrine" — as when Emerson wrote, "Calvinism rushes toward Unitarianism as Unitarianism toward naturalism" — are as easy as they are superficial. They do not get below the surface. Emerson, though a catholic and aggressive thinker, was not a discriminating one; epigrammatists seldom are. The direction of religious thought is too subtle and complex to be read by the weathervane. There are, to be sure, winds of doctrine, but there are also, apart from and unaffected by these, accumulating and expanding movements which set theology genuinely forward. Constant change in religious thought does not conflict with abiding truth at the core of it.

III

There are those who would have us believe that this process of change is due entirely to a constant adjustment on the part of Christianity, in order to adapt itself to the changing needs and ideals of society rather than to an inner impulsion in its own unfolding norm. While

there is a measure of truth in this contention,— for environment offers a needed stimulant and nourishment to development,— still, adaptation is secondary to the principle of inner development of truth itself. Christianity, like the earth, "bringeth forth fruit of *itself*, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." [1]

This is not saying that development has been uniform and harmonious. The kingdom which is "as a grain of mustard seed" as it grows manifests not only the truth enwrapped within it, but the effect upon it — evil as well as good — of its environment. Though congruous in itself, yet owing to defects in soil and climate and to parasitic growths which attach themselves to it, some leaves wither and fall, some unshapely growths disturb its proportions, and some fruit comes to naught. Nevertheless the plant is true to the seed. In other words, such an *impasse* as the Harnack-Loisy controversy

[1] Such a statement as that of Dr. Galloway in his *The Philosophy of Religion*, "The speculative impulse did not proceed from within the Christian religion itself; it was due to its contact with an independent body of philosophical conceptions" (p. 4), fails to do justice to the inherent speculative impulse which alone accounts for the freedom and range of speculation in Christian theology. There is reason to believe that the new spiritual life introduced by Christianity would have itself produced a speculative theology even without external stimulus. The wide-ranging speculation of Paul may be cited as evidence.

reached can be overcome only in a synthesis which includes and transcends both contentions.[1]

The New Theology exhibited a far higher stage of development of American Christianity than the gnarled and twisted trunk of Edwardeanism from which it sprang. Nevertheless it was but a partial and imperfect interpretation of Christian truth. In the world of spirit the law of development is far more complex and imponderable than in that of nature, just as the inner life of a person transcends in freedom and intricacy that of a plant or animal organism. There are lapses and recoveries, straight progressions and oblique and one-sided movements in the development of Christianity as a whole, just as there are in the development of the thought and character of individual Christians. The whole process goes on in the realm of freedom in which all sorts of experiments and failures occur. Nevertheless, in spite of these indirections and including them, there is a progressive unfolding of the inner nature of Christianity itself. If this is true of the

[1] See Harnack: *What is Christianity?* Loisy: *The Gospel and the Church;* William Adams Brown: *The Essence of Christianity;* J. W. Buckham: "The Vital Issues of the Harnack Controversy" (Appendix to *Christ and the Eternal Order*).

life of Christianity as experience, as it works out its own nature, much more is it true of theology, which is its imperfect expression in the realm of ideas. To look for anything like finality in the New Theology, would be as short-sighted as to fail to see its advance over previous theologies. Our task, then, will be incomplete unless in closing we indicate something of the limitations and imperfections of the New Theology and seek to discover the outlines of the newer and completer theology which is even now taking shape in the crucible of Christian life and thought.

IV

One pardonable, though serious, fault of the New Theology stands out with especial vividness in the light of the Great War. It was too optimistic. It failed to see how far many of the facts and forces of modern life are from being consonant with Christianity. Its doctrines were extensive enough in their scope but not intensive enough in their application. They did not take account of all the facts. This excess of optimism in the New Theology was due in part to its ignoring the Christless elements and conditions in modern life,— forces leading not to that

progressive coming of the kingdom which it pictured but straight to the awful cataclysm which befell the world in 1914. There was a disposition on the part of the New Theology to be content with the centralization of Christ in theory rather than to press it home to the heart of life. Its advocates were so enamored with the vision of what life would be with Christ informing and infilling its every institution and activity that they — and we who caught their vision — forgot how far our civilization is from such a goal. It would not be true to say that the New Theology ignored evil or belittled sin, but it failed to take full account of their flinty factuality.

The optimistic outlook of the New Theology is not, however, to be wondered at. For the first time in American Christianity the incarnation had been restored to its true place in theology and shed its incomparable light over the whole area of human life. The effect upon the more eager spirits in the ministry, especially upon the younger men, was electrical. It seemed to many of us who were studying theology and beginning our ministry in the eighties and nineties as if humanity were on the eve of the golden age. Those were days when "to be alive

was bliss, and to be young was very heaven." The fresh revelation of the character and mission of Jesus in all the puissance and charm of his sacrificial, victorious personality irradiated nature and humanity. The kingdom of God appeared to be at hand. We were entranced by the "vision splendid." As the dawn of the twentieth century approached we felt sure that it meant the ushering in of the reign of universal brotherhood. The intimations seemed to be everywhere,— in a growing social idealism, in deepening missionary enterprise, in broadening Christian thought and sympathy, in increasing internationalism. The vision of Dr. Hosmer's hymn was ours:

> And lo! already on the hills
> The flags of dawn appear.

The expectation, like that of the early Christians, was premature. We had still to learn:

> But the slow watches of the night
> Not less to God belong,
> And for the everlasting right
> The silent stars are strong.

It has been a harsh awakening, calling for that reinforcement of faith which other generations beside our own have had to learn to make. Yet the vision that arises afresh from the ruins

of the old order is better and larger, and the theology which it is stimulating is nobler and fairer, though less iridescent, than that attending the advent of the twentieth century.

Not only did the New Theology allow its optimism to obscure the enormity of existing evils but it did not recognize to the full the patient effort and suffering necessary for their eradication. Failing to recognize the full meaning and power of sin, it failed to give sufficient emphasis to atonement as a law of the spiritual world. Not that it denied atonement but that it allowed it to be too far absorbed into the doctrine of incarnation. To show the unity between these two doctrines, incarnation and atonement, was a valuable service which it rendered; but atonement hardly received its proportional place in the relationship.

V

In addition to these deficiencies, which were more or less its own, there were certain limitations of knowledge in the period in which the New Theology grew up which stood in its way. Since the incoming of the twentieth century there has been a great enlargement of outlook in several directions, opening fields for

religious and theological advance. We have, in fact, already entered upon the construction of a *new* New Theology and it is not difficult to discover the general direction it is to take and something of its spirit and tasks.

In the first place, theology in the future will make far larger account and far more intimate study of *religion as a whole*, in its essential nature and its varied forms. The New Theology was not indifferent to, or unacquainted with, the history of religion, but it failed to take it up in any such large way into its structure as to realize its implications and values. If it had done so it is evident that no such theory as future probation, with its ignoring of the religious — one may say Christian — values of other faiths, could have held the place it did in the minds of some at least of the representatives of the New Theology. To make this enlarged place for the study of the nature of religion as such does not mean the restriction of the scope and significance of Christianity, but rather an augmented sense of its ability to justify the consciousness which it has always had — but without sufficient estimate of its implications — of being *the universal religion*. Those pregnant words of Jesus are coming home to the present-

day student of religion with vastly greatened meaning, "I am not come to destroy but to fulfill." It has long been a common claim of Christianity to fulfill the Jewish faith. How much greater is it to fulfill the faith of all the aspiring religions of the race![1] Such an office of fulfillment carries with it, at the same time, the function of correction. To fulfill other faiths means also to disclose their defects. It must be a sifting process in order to be a fulfilling one. To exercise such an office toward other faiths cannot fail *to bring out truths and potencies in Christianity which now lie dormant within it.* To put Christianity into closer touch with the whole range and content of religion thus means the unlimited enrichment of Christian theology, both extensively and intensively.

VI

The intensified study of religion as a whole involves also a *scrutiny of the nature and content of religious experience*, such as theology has not yet undertaken. What is religious experience? What are its earliest and most fundamental manifestations? What is its relation to

[1] See J. W. Buckham: "Christianity among the Religions," *Hibbert Journal*, April, 1909.

sensation, feeling, volition, and ideas? These are problems into which we have just begun to penetrate.[1] It would not be true to say that nothing had been done in this direction prior to the present century. A study of religious experience of genuine value was made, for example, by Professor Lewis F. Stearns of Bangor Seminary, in his Ely Lectures "The Evidence of Christian Experience," as early as 1893. Yet no sufficient investigation of the nature of religious experience could be made without the ampler knowledge of primitive religion and of religious psychology which has been acquired in the last twenty-five years.

VII

This suggests a third advance which is called for, — *the interpretation of the results of Religious Psychology*. The appearance of psychology in the field of theology is no ordinary occurrence. It seems to have come as an intruder which has abruptly thrust itself into the serenity and seclusion of theological thought with little of "by-your-leave." The intrusion, if it be such,

[1] See e.g., William James: *Varieties of Religious Experience;* J. B. Pratt: *Psychology of Religious Belief;* Anna L. Sears: *The Drama of the Religious Life;* E. S. Ames: *Psychology of Religious Experience*, etc.

may mean much to theology, either in the way of advantage or of disaster. We have hardly as yet begun to realize what it means to have these lofty experiences, which for millenniums have been regarded as having a certain sacred authority and validity in themselves, suddenly presented as the functionings of a life organism in which, in spite of their apparently transcendental character, physical and nervous factors are seen to play so large a part. Clearly enough, the rise and rapid development of the psychological investigation of religion, whose progress, especially in America, has attracted wide attention, involve consequences which are by no means confined to the educational and scientific realms. If the experiences of regeneration and sanctification, of faith and prayer, of struggle and victory, are so closely related to the stages of physical growth, to health and disease, and to nervous states, what may not this involve as to the necessity of modification in Christian doctrine? The religious psychologists themselves have not thus far done much in working out the theological implications of their investigations; nor have the "old-time" theologians been forward in venturing into this field. The task is neither easy nor inviting. But

this hesitation cannot continue; the consequences involved are too vital.

The more far-sighted religious psychologists, while they are immediately concerned with the pedagogical and ethical bearings of their work, are not unaware also of its philosophical and theological issues.[1] They realize that underneath the education of the child in reverence, honesty, social justice, altruism, lie fundamental presuppositions as to the objective reality of God, moral law, sin, personality, immortality. If these are made insecure or ignored, there are no sufficient foundations upon which to build an ethical social order. And yet, if psychology alone were asked to answer the questions that arise concerning the nature of these presuppositions they would remain unanswered; for it is not the province of psychology to deal with ultimates. It is the office of *theology* to wrestle with these problems and it is her duty to face them in whatever new forms — psychological or other — they may appear. Are religious beliefs and feelings and experiences simply modes of behavior of our mental makeup, having no origin or objective validity whatever apart from their passing effect? Or

[1] See e.g., George A. Coe's *Psychology of Religion.*

are these experiences the wavering and imperfect but trustworthy manifestations of a great Reality behind our fleeting mental states? Manifestly this is a problem which leads both upward into the realm of metaphysics, where these experiences eventuate, and downward into that of biology, where lie their empirical roots. Theology must follow in both these directions. She must determine upon what metaphysical bases, if any, the psychological phenomena of religion rest. If there are no such bases, then is not only theology itself, as a science, robbed of significance, but the postulate upon which the validity and worth of religion in every soul which cherishes it rests — i.e., that there are spiritual realities corresponding to religious beliefs and feelings — is gone.

Yet for theology to confine herself to the metaphysical factors of the problem would be one-sided and ineffectual. She needs to recognize also its biological elements and implications. If the inceptions of religion are "deep-seated in our mystic frame" and if this mystic frame goes back in its origin to the potentialities of the simple cell, then there must be some congenital organic kinship between religion and *life itself* in its germinal capacities and in its

very origin. Can this kinship be traced, to any appreciable extent? If so, the elemental harmony of nature and spirit, in which lies the justification of the religious life, will have been so far assured that we shall have fresh faith in the "phenomena" of religion and fresh suggestions for their theological interpretation.

VIII

Religious psychology opens a new door, also, into the *penetralium* where psychology, ethics, and theology meet — *personality*. Emphasis upon personality, as we have noted, characterized the work of the New Theology throughout. "Personality," wrote Dr. Munger, "is the secret both of the Christian and Judaic systems — revelation by a person." [1] All of the representatives of the movement laid great stress upon it. It emerges with ever greater insistence and with ever larger promise in recent religious as well as ethical and philosophical thought. By none of the writers of this school, however, with the single exception of Newman Smyth, is personality followed in its psychological and biological bearings. Yet for its complete vindication and a fuller understanding of

[1] *Freedom of Faith*, p. 116.

its relation to our total life and environment this field may not be neglected. We cannot treat personality simply as a separate entity detached from the empirical order, if we would understand and evaluate it, any more than we can treat it as a mere phenomenon in the order of nature. It is both *nuomenon* and *phenomenon*. At least it "functions" in the world of phenomena and should be considered in this relation as well as in relation to the purely personal world.

There is needed, too, a deeper understanding of the social or community nature of personality as it affects theology. The nature of the relation of the person to the community and the problem of what sort of personality the *community*, especially the church, possesses — a problem bequeathed to us chiefly by the outreaching mind of Professor Royce — cannot but have an important bearing upon theology. The subject of the relation of the person to the community is a much larger one than has thus far come within the purview of the Social Theology. Social theology has occupied itself — and that most cogently — with the problems of social sin and social righteousness and the elemental utterances of the social consciousness. But here

are questions that go to the root of the nature of the personal order,—the character and extent of our dependence and our independence, the relation of the community to the "Spirit of the Community" [1] and of the "Spirit of the Community" to the Spirit *above* the community — all of them questions theological as well as social, ethical, and psychological.

IX

Such adventures into the deeper meaning of personality manifestly involve inquiring further into the nature and meaning of mysticism. Here is another door — open and effectual — for theology to enter. The New Theology paid little attention to the subject of mysticism. Until of late, mystical experiences were regarded with prejudice, or at least with indifference, as outside the bounds of rational inquiry. But all this has changed. Mysticism has now assumed a leading place in the study of the history, psychology, and philosophy of religion on the part of non-theological writers, and theologians themselves are becoming aware of its importance. Distinctions are being drawn between personal and impersonal, Christian and

[1] See Royce: *The Problem of Christianity.*

oriental, normal and abnormal, practical and speculative, mysticism, which throw a great deal of light upon the nature of religion itself and upon the distinctive truths of different religions, including Christianity.[1] Manifestly theology cannot be content to let mysticism usurp *its* field and task, for that would leave religion once more inchoate and unintelligent. Theology is bound to search out the metaphysical implications of mysticism — the objective realities within the subjective experiences.

X

Another manifestation of the spirit of modern life is replete with theological values as they relate to personality,— the trend toward democracy. The outreaching after a larger democracy which came with the upheaval of the Great War relates itself closely to the true evaluation of personality and calls both for the socializing and the personalizing of theology.[2] True democracy is that social and political

[1] In this connection, see Von Hügel: *The Mystical Element in Religion;* R. M. Jones: *Studies in Mystical Religion;* H. C. King: *Theology and the Social Consciousness;* E. Hermann: *The Meaning and Value of Mysticism;* J. W. Buckham: *Mysticism and Modern Life.*

[2] See the well-known books of Professors Rauschenbusch (especially *A Theology for the Social Gospel*), Peabody, and Dr.

order in which the individual person is most highly valued and is brought to his highest development and capacity, for his own sake and for the sake of the whole. In other words, democracy honors the person. Such evaluation and development of personality is impossible without religion, and religion is incompetent without a theology. Unless Christian theology recognizes and interprets both personal and social realities and values, it fails to be true to the religion it seeks to represent.

So far as relates to the ethical nature of personality, considerable advance has been made. Much was done, and ably done, by the New Theology toward ethicizing Christian doctrines. Indeed that was part of its personalizing instinct and tendency; but it is not enough. The personalizing of theology means the ethicizing of theology, but it means much more. *It means going deeper, into that in personality which at once underlies and transcends* —though it does not override — *the ethical.* There has always been a tendency in ethics toward abstraction, toward the mechanical detachment

Gladden; also C. H. Dickinson: "The Christian Reconstruction of Social Life"; and Shailer Mathews: "The Social Gospel," and "The Spiritual Challenge to Democracy," *Constructive Quarterly*, September, 1917.

of a moral quality from its possessor which is manifestly to a certain extent depersonalizing. Duty, virtue, goodness,— these have been erected into abstract entities, though they could not exist apart from persons. A truer understanding of personality requires that ethics as well as theology be, so to speak, *repersonalized*.

XI

The resolving of the quick and vital realities of character into attachable and detachable qualities for a long time stood in the way of a true understanding of Jesus Christ, especially as it encouraged the severing of His human and divine attributes. We have seen how the New Theology came to revolt against this arbitrary separation of the human and divine in Christ. Yet it did not come to a full realization of how incomparable a key *personality* affords to the understanding of the unique place and power of Jesus Christ. The New Theology, in its Christocentric character, threw great emphasis upon the Christ in His aspect as World Redeemer. The incarnation was its major doctrine. It caught the inestimable significance of the union of God and man in the God-man, "himself man"; but it did not fully realize the po-

tency of personality as a *concept* through which to interpret and realize this union. For it did not clearly recognize how, at the very heart of personality itself, wherever it exists, and whatever its stage of development, the *Divine* is implicit — its very "seed" and "spark," as the Christian mystics saw. Nor did it understand as clearly as we are now able to do, how Jesus Christ, as the Supreme Ideal of personality, stirs and summons and invigorates the nascent personality in others.[1]

Moreover, while the New Theology caught very clearly the sense of the *union of history and experience*, of the temporal and the eternal, in Christ, it did not press on in this direction far enough to develop a philosophy of history in which Christ — the Christ of the Spirit — so blends and unites with Jesus of Nazareth as to reveal the "mystery," as Paul called it, of the whole vast unfolding drama of the ages. The high task of writing a history of redemption which haunted the mind of Jonathan Edwards in his later years, which in fact he attempted,

[1] See e.g., W. E. Orchard: *The Necessity of Christ;* H. M. Du Bose: *The Consciousness of Jesus;* W. P. Du Bose: "Christ, the Solution of Human Life," *Constructive Quarterly*, vol. V, p. 201; J. W. Buckham: "The Enlarging Place of Christ in Modern Thought," *Constructive Quarterly*, vol. VI, p. 523.

but which, with his provincial knowledge of history, he could not adequately accomplish, has yet to be fulfilled.[1]

XII

The doctrine of God as well as that of Christ needs release from scholastic and conventional conceptions and completer personalizing. Nowhere has the scholastic habit of mind worked more confusion than in the doctrine of the Divine attributes. The erection of the attributes into separate and sometimes conflicting entities replaced the warm and convincing truth of the Divine Fatherhood as taught by Jesus with a Deity who was little more than a mechanical bundle of attributes. In this process not only personal but semi-personal and sometimes impersonal attributes were attached without discrimination to the Divine Being. The result was an Intellectual Construct rather than a Living God. The times of this ignorance God "winked at"— as at many another form of ignorance that has passed for wisdom — but now there is urgent need for a

[1] Probably no modern theologians have perceived so comprehendingly the scope and movement of such an interpretation of history as Principal Fairbairn in England and George A. Gordon in America.

rational and reverent attempt to understand something of what Divine Personality means.

This involves a final break with the doctrine of autocratic Sovereignty which has been so long dominant both in Roman Catholic and Protestant theology. A Sovereign Ruler, arbitrarily determining events and destinies, "according to his own pleasure" is an unethical and hence an impersonal Being. He lacks the essential nature of the Father of Spirits which makes the Christian doctrine of God what it is. It might appear, at first thought, as if a supreme Sovereign, an arbitrarily active Will, constituted a peculiarly personal God; but as a matter of fact, such a one-sided, arbitrary, irresponsible Being falls short of true personality in just that degree that He is autocratic, unethical, non-amenable to obligation to His subjects. Such a God is, indeed, not a Person at all, but a Logical Construct, a depersonalized Monarch, robbed of His true character by the requirements of a mechanical, unethical conception.

The movement of the New Theology toward a wholly personal doctrine of God needs to be carried forward toward completion. The way lies through a deeper and fuller understanding

of our own human personality — "Through Man to God," as Dr. Gordon phrased it. To apprehend the Supreme Personality we have to ask, What are the limitations attaching to *human* personality,— conditioned by its very nature as "finite" and developmental, and hedged in by an environment that is not only imperfect but evolutionary? What is the difference between individuality and pure personality? [1] When the limitations, which are, by the testimony of our own deeper consciousness, not essential to pure personality, are conceived as removed, the finite self confronts — God, its ultimate Source and End, without whom its own existence as personal is a complete riddle. From human personality to Divine Personality, from the incomplete self to the Complete Self, is no novel pathway. It is implicit in the structure of mind itself and it has been trodden for centuries by unconscious feet.

XIII

Granted that Pure Personality is the conception of God toward which theology is tending, what does this involve as to His relation to nature? Is God, then, wholly apart from the

[1] See *Personality and the Christian Ideal*, ch. III.

outer world? Must we conclude that nature neither proceeds from nor reveals Him? Does the doctrine of God as Spiritual Person oblige us to detach Him wholly from nature and thus leave the external world either an illusion or an independent and alien reality?

This is a conclusion which Christian theology has never been willing to adopt, even in its utmost perplexity. The first article of its oldest creed affirms the contrary,— "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth,"— and theology has persistently maintained this conviction in the face both of inner questioning and outer opposition. To be sure, belief in a Perfect God who is the author of an imperfect world appears to involve a contradiction, or at least a paradox. Yet it is one of those paradoxes in which hides a profound truth; at least, so Christian faith has always felt.

Christianity has, indeed, never seen any sufficient reason why Perfect Personality should not give rise to an imperfect material universe provided it serves its end. Human personality is embodied in a physical investiture which is at once a marvelous yet an imperfect medium and expression of itself. Is it otherwise with the

Divine Person? Goethe called the physical world the garment of God. If so, it is a beautiful garment, but an imperfect one. Why? That is a puzzling question, yet not wholly dark when one considers that the universe must serve at the same time as the medium of the Perfect Personality and of our own striving, imperfect, developing personalities, as well as the home and theater of action of millions of lives lower than ours that are pressing toward their own types of self-fulfillment. Both they and we — so far as our physical lives are concerned — are parts of the cosmos, life of its life, and flesh of its flesh; and yet we all must use it — as does God Himself — as our means of self-expression and self-communication. What could we expect of such a universal medium of personal and sub-personal life except that which we find in the world about us,— imperfection shot through with perfection, limitation lying in the bosom of the Unlimited, freedom held in the hand of law, death swallowed up of life? In other words, a universe of divine order and of free personal initiative and progress could hardly be other than correspondingly paradoxical, malleable, many-sided,— responsive at the same time to the Perfect Person, disclosing Himself in reve-

lations of immanent beauty and sublimity, and also mirroring the struggles and aspirations, yes, and the lapses and failures, of multitudes of imperfect natures moving toward their myriad self-willed yet divinely-embraced ends.

XIV

As a solution for the problem of the imperfections of the world, the now somewhat familiar and apparently growing notion, popularized by H. G. Wells, of a finite and developing God producing a blundering but improving universe as He gains skill and direction by experiment and conquest, escapes some difficulties but raises more.[1] The fatal defect of this theory is that it fails to account for the idea, or rather the intuition, of perfection. The ontological argument, or that which undergirds it, will not down. If you say the idea of perfection is only a regulative principle of the mind, like time and space, you have not disposed of the question whence and why it arises.

[1] See e.g., H. G. Wells: *God the Invisible King;* H. A. Overstreet: "The Democratic Conception of God," *Hibbert Journal*, vol. XI, p. 394; F. H. Foster: "Some Theistic Implications of Bergson's Philosophy," *American Journal of Theology*, vol. XXII, p. 2; R. H. Doterer: "The Argument for a Finite Theology" and "The Doctrine of a Finite God in War Time Thought," *Hibbert Journal*, vol. XVI, p. 415.

Can perfection be a fugitive notion without source, content, or reality? Or does it originate in an All-Perfect from whom the imperfect selves receive origin and ideal, not in order that they may remain imperfect but that they may approximate perfection in the only way that gives their striving meaning and worth — free self-realization?[1] Whether the origin of ourselves and of our world in a Perfect Person be demonstrable or not, it is a conviction that burns at the heart of Christianity and, so long as theology continues Christian, it is likely in some form to burn on. The problem which it leaves — of how an imperfect world can have its origin in Perfect Person — will continue to exercise Christian thought; but the more we learn of the relation of personality to its medium of expression, the less difficulty will there be, perhaps, in understanding something of the strange contradictions of the cosmos in which we find ourselves. The concept "God" is exceedingly inclusive. If at its center lies personality— "Oh, heart I made, a Heart beats here!"

[1] That the Perfect Self originates the imperfect selves, not that they may return and be absorbed into Itself, but that they may strive toward perfection for themselves, is at least the faith that best conserves personality, human and divine. See T. R. Glover: "Progress in Religion," *Constructive Quarterly*, June, 1918, p. 311.

— at its circumference it may well harbor forms of revelation which we term impersonal and sometimes brand as pantheistic, but which appear otherwise when irradiated by the central light of Perfect Personality.

XV

Such are some of the issues and problems that await a progressive theology. They are both profound and strenuous, yet attractive to the spirit of Christianity. In coping with them American theology will have a large and increasing share.

So far from being a decadent science, Christian theology is yet in its youth. It will not be permanently set aside by any other interest, however immediate or absorbing. Holding fast to the conviction that the universe has meaning and unity, that there are ultimate and eternal truths, and that it is possible to know something of them, abandoning the idea of finality but not that of progress, with a deeper sense of personal and social values, it will press forward more humbly but more hopefully than before its deserved humiliation toward the goal of its high calling in Christ Jesus. For of all the sci-

ences theology is essentially the freshest as well as the oldest, the most progressive as well as the most permanent.

THE END

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